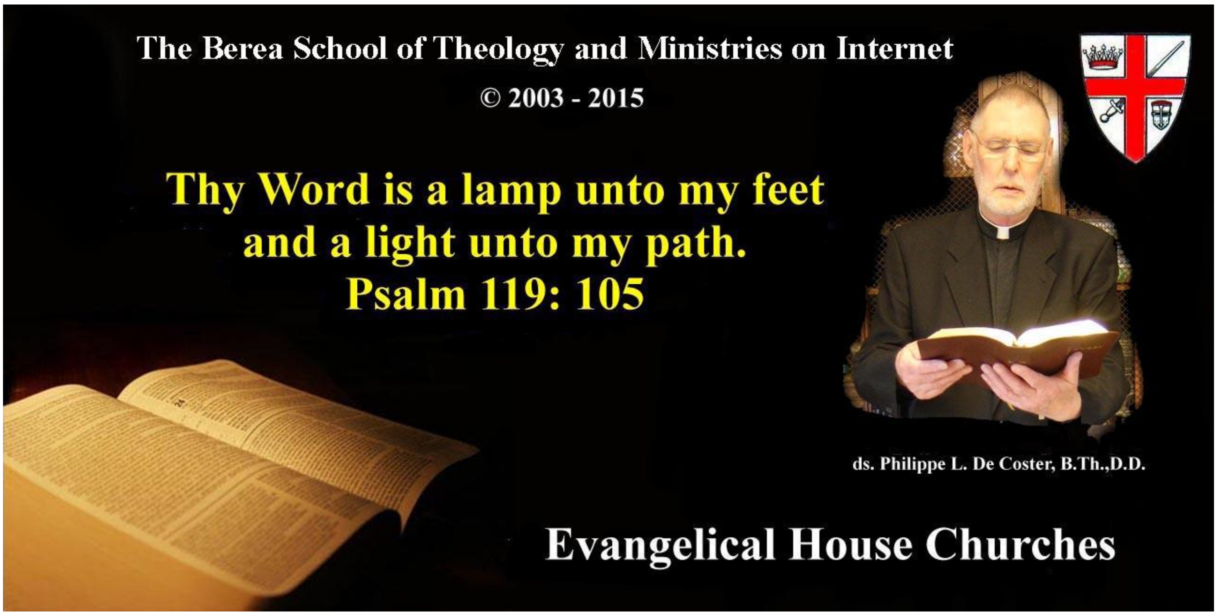


Berea Bible Handbook – Part Seven

Hebrew Prophecy from Isaiah to Daniel

Part Seven: The Book of Jeremiah

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Commentary on the Book of Jeremiah and Lamentations

by Arno C. Gaebelein (Public Domain)



The *Annotated Bible*, by Arno Clemens Gaebelein (1861-1945), is a "passage by passage" commentary on the whole Bible. It was originally published in nine volumes from 1913 to 1922. SwordSearcher contains the complete Gaebelein commentary. Gaebelein was a careful teacher of prophecy. As World War I unfolded around him, many Christians of the time believe they were experiencing Armageddon. Gaebelein cautioned believers against this view, having an understanding of Israel's place in prophecy that had not yet been fulfilled. His prudence against "date setting" and other reckless prophetic teaching makes his studies in

Scripture worthy of attention today. Gaebelein taught that the Bible foretold the return of Israel to their promised land, but died before being able to witness those events take place.

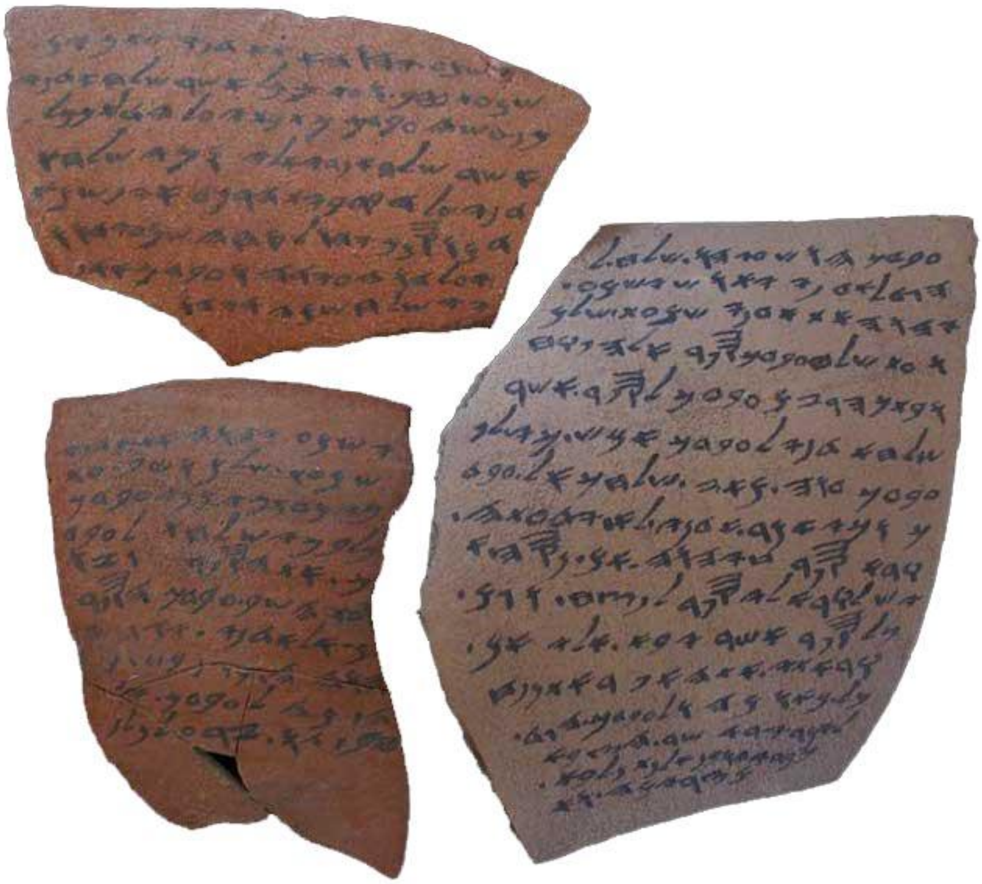
For more than half a century evangelist, author, journalist, and Bible expositor Arno C. Gaebelein passionately proclaimed the prophetic truths of the Bible and daily lived with the hope of their fulfilment. With a ministry that bridged two centuries and endured two world wars, Gaebelein never doubted the relevance of the study of prophecy for spiritual growth and for interaction with the chaos of culture. In the midst of the thundering storms of World War I, he encouraged Christians not to despair, for the trials of this world would one day give way to the triumph of Christ. In 1915 he wrote:

> The Lord Jesus Christ is coming back! He may be here at any moment! He may come today! Now this is not a foolish assertion that He *will* come today. Nor is it the setting of a specific time for Him to come, which would be equally foolish and wrong; yet many do it. It is the sober statement of a fact, to arouse souls from their carelessness and indifference, and point them to the clear testimony of God's only Word that the Lord Jesus is coming again , and *may* be here today (*Meat in Due Season*, 64).



"Jeremiah is an intensely human personality, a man whom we can understand and love, and yet a person endowed with such mysterious power from on high that we at times are overawed by his grandeur. Jeremiah, so humanly weak,

and yet so divinely firm; his love so humanly tender, and at the same time so divinely holy; his eyes streaming with tears at beholding the affliction about to come upon his people, yet sparkling with fiery indignation against their sins and abominations; his lips overflowing with sympathy for the daughter of Zion, only to pronounce upon her almost in the same breath the judgment and condemnation she so fully deserved. Truly so remarkable and powerful a personality, at the same time so lovable, that we cannot fail to recognize in him an instrument especially chosen and prepared by the God of grace and strength and wisdom" (Laetsch, 23).



Archaeological light

Between 1935-38, twenty-one pottery fragments (called ostraca), were discovered at the site of ancient Lachish (thirty miles SW of Jerusalem). Lachish was one of the last three cities to be conquered by Nebuchadnezzar (cf. Jer. 34:7). These potsherds were in a small guard-room located outside the city gate. Inscribed with Hebrew script reflecting the writing of Jeremiah's time, they are dated from the autumn of 589 B.C., having been found in an ash layer—the remains of Nebuchadnezzar's burning of the city. They are thus

contemporary with Jeremiah. Some of the fragments represent letters written by an outpost soldier to his commander at Lachish.

Letter VI complains about certain princes who "weaken our hands" by their defeatist actions. This is almost identical to the charge that some were lodging against Jeremiah:

> "He weakeneth the hands of the men of war that remain in this city, and the hands of all the people, in speaking such words unto them, for this man seeketh not the welfare of this people, but the hurt" (Jer. 38:4).

Letter IV states that "we are watching for the signals of Lachish…." Compare this with Jeremiah 6:1, where the same word for "signal" is employed. Letter III contains a reference to a certain "prophet" who had proclaimed a message of "Beware." Some have speculated that this may be a reference to Jeremiah, but the identification is not certain. The texts of these communications are found in Pritchard (212-214).

Jeremiah, the Prophet

His name is Jeremiah, a common name among the people. Some think the name means 'God throws down.' This would be in keeping with his task and message. Jeremiah was one of the priests that lived at Anathoth in the land of Benjamin, a village about 2 ½ to 3 miles northeast of Jerusalem. It is one of the 12 cities set aside for the priests in the land of Judah, Simeon and Benjamin (Joshua 21:13-19; 1 Chronicles 6:57 60).

Jeremiah was young, usually considered to be about 20, when the Lord called him to be a prophet (chapter 1:6). He was called to be a prophet in 628-627 BC. (chapters 2, 3) He continued to serve as a prophet until after the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BC. After the destruction of Jerusalem the king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, left Jeremiah in Jerusalem with Gedaliah, the governor of the remaining people. When the people rebelled and killed Gedaliah, they fled to Egypt and took Jeremiah with them. Tradition relates that in Egypt they stoned Jeremiah. (Another tradition states they sawed him in two.) Jeremiah in his life suffered much hatred and persecution, but he remained obedient.

Jeremiah is of great inspiration to us today. Despite all the hatred and trying experiences that be had, even though Jeremiah by nature was mild, sensitive, and retiring, he remained faithful to his unpleasant task and is an example of an obedient prophet. He found his comfort and strength in the promise the Lord

gave him in his call "Be not afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you." chapter 1: "They will fight against you, but they shall not prevail over you, for I am with you and deliver you, says the Lord." chapter 1:19

God's Final Effort to Save Jerusalem. Jeremiah lived about a hundred years after Isaiah. Isaiah had saved Jerusalem from Assyria Jeremiah tried to save it from Babylon but alas failed

Jeremiah was called to the prophetic office (626 BC) Jerusalem was partly destroyed in 606 BC and further devastated in 597 BC and finally burned and desolated in 586 BC.

Jeremiah live through these terrible forty years, "the close of the monarchy", "the death agony of the nation" could be titles to his prophetic book. Jeremiah was a pathetic, lonely figure, God's last measure to the Holy city which had become hopelessly and fanatically attached to idols. Jeremiah’s main theme through his prophecy was a carelessly crying that if they would repent God would save them from Babylon...in the final analysis his pleadings fell on deaf ears only to be remembered by another generation.

Jeremiah’s historical time

2 Kings 22 - 25 and 2 Chronicles 34 - 36 bring to us the background for the times in which Jeremiah served. Judah and Jerusalem had forfeited their day of grace by shameful sinning and contempt of God's Word and were hastening to their doom. 0f the five kings under whom Jeremiah prophesied, only the first one, Josiah, was a pious ruler. After his death in 609 BC in a battle with Pharaoh Necho of Egypt at Megiddo, his successors were all very wicked. They were: Jehoahaz (Shallum), who ruled 3 months; Jehoiakim, who ruled 11 years; Jehoiachin, who ruled 3 months; and Zedekiah, who ruled 11 years. Under their reign the people went back into gross paganism and immoral practices. (1:16; 7:18; 19:5; 32:35). Covetousness, murder, adultery, stealing, false swearing were rampant. (~: 34, 5: 27-29). The moral corruption tainted even prophet and priest. (6:13; 8:10; 23:11-15). Year after year Jeremiah came to the people with , messages from the Lord, but they would not hearken and obey. (4:14; 5:15-17; 18:8; 25:3; 35:15). The people preferred to listen to the false prophets' who were predicting peace and prosperity, (23:27, 29). The Babylonian Captivity began in 606 BC, but did not have any influence on the people who remained in Judah.

His background and message

As Assyria had been the background of Isaiah's ministry, so Babylon was the background of Jeremiah's ministry.

The Internal Situation

The Northern Kingdom had fallen and much of Judah. They had suffered reverse after reverse until Jerusalem alone was left. Still they ignored the continued warnings of the prophets and grew harder and harder in their idolatry and wickedness. The hour of doom was about to strike.

The International Situation

A three cornered contest for world supremacy was on... Assyria, Babylon and Egypt. For 300 years Assyria, the North Euphrates valley, Nineveh its capital, had ruled the world; but now was growing weak.

Babylon, in the South Euphrates valley, was becoming powerful.

Egypt, in the Nile valley, which 1,000 years before had been a world power, and had declined, was again becoming ambitious.

Babylon won, about the middle of Jeremiah's ministry. It broke the power of Assyria (607 BC) and two years later crushed Egypt, in the battle of Alchemist (605 BC) and for 70 years ruled the world. This 70 year period was the same 70 years as the Jew's captivity.

Jeremiah's Message

As Jeremiah speaks the Lord's condemnation on the people for their sins against the Lord, and declares that Babylon will conquer and destroy Jerusalem and take the people into captivity, the prophet carries out the direction of the Lord (chapter 1:10): "See, I have set you this day over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow." Yet as the prophet speaks to the remnant' the few who remained true to the Lord God, he speaks words of divine grace and deliverance, in keeping with his task, chapter 1: 10, "to build and to plant."

From the outset, twenty years before the issue was settled, Jeremiah unceasingly insisted that Babylon would be the victor. All through his incessant and bitter complaints over Judah’s wickedness these ideas are ever recurring:

1. Judah is going to be destroyed by victorious Babylon.
2. If Judah will turn from her wickedness, somehow God will save her from destruction at the hands of Babylon.
3. Later, when there seemed no longer any hope of Judah’s repentance: if, only as a matter of political expedience, Judah will submit to Babylon, she shall be spared.
4. Judah, destroyed, shall recover and yet dominate the world.
5. Babylon, destroyer of Judah, shall herself be destroyed, never to rise again.

Jeremiah's audacity

Jeremiah unceasingly advised Jerusalem to surrender to the king of Babylon, so much that his enemies accused him of being a traitor. Nebuchadnezzar rewarded him for thus advising his people, not only by sparing his life, but by offering him any honour

that he would accept, even a worthy place in the Babylonian court (39:12). Yet Jeremiah cried aloud, over and over, that the kinky of Babylon was committing a heinous crime in destroying the Lord's people and for that, Babylon, in time, would be desolated, and lie forever so. (See chapters 50, 51)

Outline

Though the prophecies are not necessarily in time order, the book may be divided thus:

1. Call of Jeremiah. Chapter 1
2. Denunciation of Judah and calling Judah to repentance. Chapter 2–35
3. Personal history of the Prophet during and after siege of Jerusalem. He is taken to Egypt. Chapter 36–45
4. Prophecies regarding Babylon and other eight surrounding nations. Chapter 46–51
5. Historical Conclusion. An account of the capture of Jerusalem and the exile. Chapter 52

Contemporary Kings of Judah

Manasseh (697-642 BC)	55 years	Very wicked (see 2 Chronicles 33) Jeremiah was born under his reign.

Amon	(641-640 BC)	2 years	The long and wicked reign of his father Manasseh had sealed the doom of Judah.
Josaih	(639-608 BC)	31 years	A good king. A great reformer. Jeremiah began his ministry in Josiah's 13th year. The reformation was only outward. At heart the people still were idolaters.
Jehoahaz	(608 BC)	3 months	Was carried to Egypt.
Jehoiakim	(608-597 BC)	11 years	Openly for idols, boldly defiant of God, a bitter enemy of Jeremiah.
Jehoiakin	(597 BC)	3 months	Was carried to Babylon.
Zedekiah	(589-586 BC)	11 years	Rather friendly to Jeremiah, but a weak king, a tool in the hands of the wicked princes.

Chronology of Jeremiah's Times

627 BC	Josiah began his reforms (2 Chronicles 34)
626 BC	Jeremiah's Call
626 BC	Scythian Invasion (Jeremiah 4)
621 BC	Book found. Josiah's Great Reformation (2 Kings 22, 23)
608 BC	Josiah slain at Megiddo, by Pharaoh
607 BC	Nineveh destroyed by Babylon
606 BC	Judah subdued by Babylon. 1st Captivity
605 BC	Battle of Carchemish: Babylon crushed Egypt
597 BC	Jehoiachin's Captivity
593 BC	Zedekiah's Visit to Babylon
586 BC	Jerusalem Burned. Temporary End of David's Kingdom.

Contemporary Prophets

Jeremiah was leader in the brilliant constellation of prophets clustered around the destruction of Jerusalem.

Ezekiel, a fellow priest, somewhat younger than Jeremiah, preaching in Babylon, among the captives, the same things that Jeremiah was preaching in Jerusalem.

Daniel, a man of royal blood, holding the line in the palace of King Nebuchadnezzar.

Habakkuk and Zephaniah helping Jeremiah in Jerusalem.

Nahum, at same time, predicting the Fall of Nineveh.

Obadiah, at same time, predicting the Ruin of Edom.

Chronology of Jeremiah's Book

Some of Jeremiah's messages are dated. Some are not. Time notices which are indicated are as follows:

In Josiah's reign:	1:2; 3:6
In Jehoiakim's reign:	22:18; 25:1; 26:1; 35:1; 36:1; 45:1
In Zedekiah's reign:	21:1; 24:1,8; 27:3, 12: 28:1; 29:3; 32:1; 34:2; 37:1; 38:5; 39:1; 49:34; 51:59
In Egypt:	43:7, 8; 44:1

The book is not arranged in chronological order. Some late messages come early in the book, and some early messages come late in the book. These messages were delivered orally, and perhaps repeatedly, for years, possibly, before Jeremiah began to write them. The writing of such a book was a long and laborious task. Writing parchment, made of sheep or goat skins, was scarce and expensive. It was made into a long roll, and wound around a stick. This may, in part, account for the lack of order in Jeremiah’s book. After writing an incident or discourse, some other utterance delivered previously would be suggested, and he would write it down in some cases without dating it, thus filling up the parchment as he unrolled it.

Book of Jeremiah in Short

Chapter 1

The Call of Jeremiah

It was to a hard and thankless task. Like Moses, he was reluctant to accept the responsibility. It came when he was only a "child" probably about 20. "Anathoth" (verse 1) his home, was about 2 ½ miles northeast of Jerusalem. It is now called "Anata." The "boiling caldron" (verse 13) meant the Babylonian army. Opening utterance: Jerusalem will be destroyed by Babylon (verse 14)

Chapter 2

Israel's Apostasy

In a pathetic and impassioned rebuke for their shameless idolatry, Israel is likened to an espoused wife who has forsaken her husband for promiscuous association with men, making of herself a common prostitute.

Chapter 3

Judah Worse than Israel

In chapter 2 "Israel" means the whole nation. In this chapter it means the Northern Kingdom, which 300 years before had split off from Judah, and 100 years before had been carried away captive by the Assyrians. Judah, blind to the significance of Israel's fall, not only did not repent, but under the wicked reign of Mannasseh sunk to lower and lower depths of depravity. The reunion of Judah, and Israel in predicted (verses 17-19; also 50:4-5; Hosea 1:11) In verse 20 we find a metaphor of an adulterous wife.

Chapter 4

Approaching Desolation of Judah

This chapter describes the advance of the devastating Babylonian armies which destroyed Jerusalem in 606-605 BC. It may also, in part, refer to the Scythian invasion, which shortly preceded that of the Babylonians.

Chapter 5

Universal Depravity of Judah

Not one righteous man (verse 1) promiscuous sexual indulgence, even among the married, like animals (verses 7-8) scoffing at the prophet's warning (verse 12) wholly given to deceit, oppression and robbery (verses 26-28) satisfied with rottenness in the government (verses 30-31) For more on false prophets (verse 30) see chapter 23.

Chapter 6

Destruction from the North

A vivid prophetic description of the destruction of Jerusalem at the hands of the Babylonian invaders (verses 22-26) which later came to pass in Jeremiah's own lifetime. Over and over (verses 16-19) he warns, which pathetic insistence, that repentance would be their last possible chance to escape ruin.

Chapter 7

Repentance their Only Hope

This is one of Jeremiah's heart-rending appeals for repentance. Based on God's amazing promise that if only the people would hearken to their God Jerusalem would never fall (verses 5-7) With all their abominable practices (9, 31) and even though they had erected idols in the Temple (verse 30) yet they had a superstitious regard for the Temple and its services, and seemed to think, that, come what may God would not let Jerusalem be destroyed because His Temple was there (verses 4, 10) "Queen of heaven" (verse 18) Ashtoreth, principal female Canaanite deity, whose worship was accompanied with the most degrading forms of immorality. "Hinnom" (verses 31-32) the valley on the south side of Jerusalem, where children were burnt in sacrifice to Molech, afterward came to be used as the name of hell, "Gehenna"

Chapter 8

"The Harvest is Past"

Fully conscious of the futility of his appeals and rebukes, Jeremiah speaks of the impending desolation of Judah as if it were already accomplished (verse 20) False prophets (verses 10-11) their insistence that Jerusalem was in no danger constituted one of Jeremiah's most difficult problems (see notes on chapter 23)

Chapter 9

The Broken-Hearted Prophet

Jeremiah, a man of sorrows in the midst of a people abandoned to everything vile (8:6; 9:2-9) weeping day and night at the though of frightful impending retribution, moved about among them, begging, pleading, persuading, threatening, entreating, imploring that they turn from their wickedness. But all in vain.

Chapter 10

Jehovah the True God

It seems that the threat of Babylonian invasion spurred the people of Judah to great activity in the manufacture of idols, as if idols could save them. This gave Jeremiah occasion to remind them that what they were doing was further aggravation of their already appalling sin against God.

Chapter 11

The Broken Covenant

This chapter seems to belong to the period of reaction, after Josiah's great reformation, as told in 2 Kings 23 when the people had restored their idols. For Jeremiah's rebuke they had plotted his death (9:21)

Chapter 12

Jeremiah's Complaint

Contrasting his own suffering with the apparent prosperity of those against whom he was preaching, and who were ridiculing his threats (verse 4) Jeremiah complains of the ways of God. Then the promise of future restoration (verses 15-17)

Chapter 13

The Marred Girdle

Jeremiah made considerable use of symbols in his preaching (see for example 19:1) The girdle was probably richly decorated, a conspicuous part of Jeremiah's dress, as he walked about the streets of Jerusalem. Later, rotted, ragged and dirty, it served to attract attention. As curious crowds gathered around the prophet it gave his occasion to explain that even so Judah, with whom Jehovah had clothed Himself to walk among men, once beautiful and glorious, would be marred and cast off.

Chapters 14, 15

Jeremiah's Intercession

A prolonged drought had stripped the land of food. Jeremiah though hated, ridiculed and mocked, it made his heart ache to see them suffer. His intercession to God is as near an approach to the spirit of Christ as is to be found anywhere in the Old Testament. What is called "Jeremiah's Grotto" one of the retreats to which he was said to have retired to weep, was at tile foot of the knoll, on which 600 years later, the cross of Jesus is believed to have stood.

Chapter 16

Jeremiah Forbidden to Marry

The domestic life of the prophets, in some cases, was used to reinforce the burden of their preaching. Isaiah and Hosea were married, and named their children for their principal ideas. Jeremiah was commanded to remain single, as a sort of symbolic background to his persistent predictions of impending bloody slaughter: "What's the use of raising a family just to be butchered in the frightful carnage about to be loosed upon the inhabitants of Judah?” Again the promise of restoration is found in verses 14-15.

Chanter 17

Judah’s Sin Indelible

Their downfall inevitable. Yet the promise-is flung out again and again that if only they would turn to God, Jerusalem would remain forever (verses 24-25).

Chapter 18

The Potter's Clay

A very apt illustration of God’s power to alter the destiny of a nation. Jeremiah used it as the basis for another appeal to the wicked nation to amend its ways. But in vain.

Chapter 19

The Earthen Bottle

It may have been a vase of exquisite workmanship. Being broken in the presence of Jerusalem's leaders was an impressive way to re-announcing impending ruin for the city.

Some other symbols which Jeremiah used to gain attention to his preaching were: the Marred Girdle (chapter 13), Abstinence from Marriage (chapter 16), the Potter s Clay (chapter 18), Bonds and bars (chapter 27), Buying a Field (chapter 32).

Chapter 20

Jeremiah Imprisoned

Jeremiah went from his vase-breaking rendezvous with the leaders in the valley of Hinnom to the Temple and began to proclaim there the same message to the people. For this Pashhur, one of the chief officers of the Temple, put him in prison. "Stocks" (verse 2) consisted of a wooden frame in which feet, neck and hands were fastened so as to hold the body in a distorted and painful position. It drew from Jeremiah an outburst of remonstrance with God. (verses 7-18)

Chapter 21

The Siege Begins

This chapter belongs to the last days of Jeremiah's life. King Zedekiah, frightened at the approach of the Babylonian army, appeals to Jeremiah to intercede with God. Jeremiah advises Zedekiah to yield the city to the Babylonians, in order to save the people from death.

Chapter 22

Warning to King Jehoiakim

This chapter belongs to the reign of Jehoiakim, a wicked and cruel king. "Shallum" (verse 11) was Jehoahaz, who was carried to Egypt and died there (2 Kings 23:31-34) Jehoiakim's miserable death (verses 18-19) is hinted in 2 Kings 24:6; 2 Chronicles 36:6; In verse 30 we see that Jehoiachin is childless. He had children, out of whom came Christ, but he and his uncle Zedekiah were the last

earthly kings to sit on David's throne. It was the end of the temporal kingdom of Judah.

Chapter 23

False Prophets

A bitter indictment of the leaders of God's people. Jeremiah's stinging arraignment of Davidic kings supplies a background for a pre-vision of the coming Davidic Messiah (23:5-8) As for the false prophets: they were the greatest hindrance to the acceptance of Jeremiah's preaching: in the name of God, delivering their own messages crying out "Jeremiah is lying. We are the prophets of God, and God has told us that Jerusalem is safe!"

Chapter 24

The Two Baskets of Figs

The good figs representing the best of the people, who had been carried to Babylon in Jehoiachin's captivity (597 BC) and earlier including Ezekiel and Daniel; the bad figs, those who had remained in Jerusalem, minded, with Egypt's aid, to resist Babylon (2 Kings 24:10-20)

Chapter 25

Seventy Year's Captivity Predicted

This was in the early part of Jehoiakim's reign (verse l) about 604 BC. The remarkable thing is that the exact duration of Babylon's sway is foretold (verses 11-14; 29:10 2 Chronicles 36:21; Ezra 1:1; Daniel 9:2; Zechariah 7:5) An amazing prophecy. No possible way for Jeremiah to know that, except by direct revelation from God.

Chapter 26

Jeremiah's Trial before the Princes

His accusers were the priests and false prophets. But Jeremiah had friends among the princes, especially one Ahikam, who saved him from death. However, one of Jeremiah's fellow prophets, named Uriah, did not fare so well (verses 20-24)

Chapter 27, 28

Bonds and Bars

Jeremiah put a yoke, like that worn by oxen, on his neck, and went about the city, saying, Thus shall Babylon put a yoke on the necks of this people. On of the false prophets, Hananiah with brazen impudence, broke the yoke (28:10) and, as a punishment died within two months (28:1, 17)

Chapter 29

Jeremiah’s Letter to the Exiles

Written after Jehoiachin, and the best of the people, had been taken to Babylon, advising them to be peaceful and obedient captives, and promising return, after 70 years (verse 10) to their homeland. But even in Babylon the false prophets kept up their fight against Jeremiah (verses 21-32)

In Chapters 30 - 33 we have many beautiful and glorious Gospel promises given to the believing people of God who listened to the Word of the Lord in repentance and faith.

In reading and studying these four chapters we are to remember the concepts of:

1) direct prophecy,

2) prophetic perspective,

3) type and anti-type,

4) the extended and wondrous use of vivid imagery,

5) the fact that Zion, Jerusalem, Judah, Israel, Ephraim, Joseph, etc., refer again and again to the true Israel, to the believing people of God, the Church, the Communion of Saints,

6) the concept of 'the day of the Lord' and 'days are coming', etc., refers to the days of the Messiah and/or of His work before the birth of Christ.

The place of these four chapters in the center of the Book of Jeremiah reminds us that we must always keep the message of the Gospel at the center of our faith, of our preaching and teaching, and of our lives.

The frequency of the statement 'says the Lord' and 'words that the Lord spake' assures us that the promises will come to fulfilment.

Chapters 30, 31

A Song of Restoration

For both Israel and Judah, with Messianic fore gleams, commanded of God to be written (verse 2) so that it could be kept to compare with the events of after ages.

The New Covenant (31:31-34) The Old Testament is the story of God's dealings with the Hebrew nation on the basis of the Covenant given at Mt. Sinai. Here is a definite prediction that the Mosaic Covenant would be superseded by Another Covenant. Displacement of the Mosaic Covenant by the Christian Covenant is the main thesis of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Chapter 32

Jeremiah Buys a Field

This was the year before Jerusalem fell. The burning of the city and desolation of Judah was almost at hand. Amid the gloom and despair of the hour Jeremiah was commanded of God to buy a field, in public ceremony, and put away the deed for safe keeping, to emphasize his prediction that the captives would return, and the land again would be cultivated.

Chapter 33

The "Branch"

Of the 20 Davidic kings who reigned over Judah during~ the 400 years between David and the Captivity, most of them were very bad. Only a few were worthy the name of David. In chapter 22 and 23 Jeremiah bitterly indicated this family line of kings to whom God had given the promise of an ETERNAL THRONE. Here, in chapter 33, he repeats with fuller explanation, the prophecy of ONE GREAT KING called "The Branch" in whom the promise would be fulfilled.

Chapter 34

Zedekiah's Proclamation of Liberty

During the siege, Zedekiah proclaimed freedom to all slaves, evidently to gain God’s favour; but failed to enforce it.

Chapter 35

The Example of the Rechabites

Rechabites were a tribe, descended from the time of Moses (1 Chronicles 2:55; Numbers 10:29-32; Judges 1:16; 2 Kings 10:15, 23) who through the centuries, had adhered to their ascetic life.

Chapter 36

The King Burns Jeremiah's Book

Jeremiah, at this time, had been prophesying for 23 years, from the 13th year of Josiah to the 4th year of Jehoiakim. He is now commanded to gather these prophecies into a book, so that they could be read to the people, for at the time, Jeremiah himself was not free to speak to the people (verse 5). It took a year or so to write the book (verses l, 9). The reading of the book make a profound impression on some of the princes, but the king brazenly and defiantly burned the book. Then Jeremiah wrote it all over again.

Chapter 37, 38

Jeremiah's Imprisonment

During the siege, when the Babylonians had temporarily withdrawn, Jeremiah, probably because of the scarcity of food in Jerusalem, attempted to leave the city to go to his home in Anthorth. This, because of his persistent advice to yield to the king of Babylon, looked, to his enemies, as if it might be an effort to join the Babylonians. Thus, on suspicion that Jeremiah was a traitor, working in the interest of the Babylonians, he was imprisoned. Zedekiah was friendly to Jeremiah, but he was a weak king.

Chapter 39

Jerusalem Burned

This is told also in chapter 52, and in 2 Kings 25, where Nebuchadnezzar, knowing of Jeremiah’s life long admonition to Jerusalem to submit to him, now offered to confer on Jeremiah any honour that he would accept, even a worthy place in the Babylonian court (verses 11-14; 40:1-6) See also 2 Chronicles 36.

In Chapters 40-45, we have events and prophecies after the fall of Jerusalem. The section includes Jeremiah’s ministry among the remnant left in Judah, and his ministry among the refugees in Egypt.

Chapter 40, 41

Gedaliah Made Governor

Gedaliah, whom Nebuchadnezzar appointed governor over Judah, was son of Ahikam, Jeremiah's friend (40:5; 26:24). But within three months he was assassinated (30:2; 41:1)

Chapter 42 ,43

Departure for Egypt

The remnant, fearing reprisal by Nebuchadnezzar, for the slaying of Gedalith, fled to Egypt, though explicitly warned of God that it would mean extinction. They took Jeremiah along.

Chapter 44

Jeremiah's Final Appeal

This last effort to induce them to abandon their idolatry failed. They were defiant. The "queen of heaven" (verse 17) was Ashtoreth, whose worship was with acts of immorality, in this case with their husband's consent (verses 15, 19)

The place and manner of Jeremiah's death are not known. One tradition is that he was stoned to death in Egypt. Another is that he was taken from Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar, with Baruch, to Babylon, and died there.

Chapter 45

Baruch

Baruch, Jeremiah's scribe, was a man of prominence, with high ambitions (verse 5). Was recognized as having great influence with Jeremiah (43:3)

Chapter 46

Egypt

A description of the defeat of the Egyptian arm at Carchemish (605 BC) in the middle period of Jeremiah's life (verses 1-12); and a later prophecy that Nebuchadnezzar would invade Egypt (verses 13-26), which is an expansion of 43:8-13. Over 100 years earlier Isaiah had prophesied Assyrian invasion of Egypt (Isaiah 18-20) Ezekiel also had something to say about Egypt (Ezekiel 19 to 32)

Chapter 47

The Philistines

This prophecy, foretelling the desolation of Philistia by Babylon, was fulfilled 20 years later when King Nebuchadnezzar took Judah. Other prophets who paid their respects to the Philistines were Isaiah (14:28-32); Amos (1:6-8); Ezekiel (25:15-17) Zephaniah (2:4-7) and Zechariah (9:1-7)

Chapter 48

Moab

Moab is located along the eastern shore of the Dead Sea The Moabites are descendants of Lot, Abraham's nephew. They were habitual enemies of Israel and Judah.

Jeremiah appears to be indebted to Isaiah, chapters 15 and 16 for some of his message.

Two truths occur again and again in this chapter:

1) desolation and great destruction on Moab, and

2) the cause of the desolation and destruction'

If we think that this is too long a tirade against an ancient and forgotten people, we must remind ourselves that its repeated warnings have been ignored. Pride, trust in self and not in the Lord, and ungodliness bring about the downfall of nations to this day.

A picture of impending desolation of Moab. Moab helped Nebuchadnezzar against Judah, but later was devastated at his hands in 582 BC. For centuries the land had lain desolate and sparsely inhabited, the ruins of its many cities testifying to its ancient populous ness. Its restoration (verse 47), and that of Ammon (49:6) may have been fulfilled in their absorption into the general Arab race, some of whom were present on the day of Pentecost, when the Gospel was first proclaimed to the world (Acts 2:11). Or, it may mean that the land will yet again be prosperous. Other prophecies about Moab are found in Isaiah 15, 16; Ezekiel 25:8-11; Amos 2:1-3; Zephaniah 2:8-11

Chapter 49 Ammon,

Edom, Syria, Hazor, Elam

A prediction that Nebuchadnezzar would conquer these nations which he did. Ammon (see under Ezekiel 25:1-11). Edom (see under the prophet Obadiah)

These prophecies regarding people and nations centuries ago reveal to us today:

1) The sovereignty of the Lord God. He rules the nations.

2) The cause(s) of the destruction of peoples and nations. Idolatry and worship of false god(s), dispossessing people of their land' boastful pride, trust in one's own riches' wisdom' and might.

3) The Lord's judgments are always just. The patient Lord does punish, very severely if necessary.

4) The Lord's judgments however must always serve the Lord's plan of salvation, His grace and redemption.

Chapter 50, 51

Prediction of the Fall of Babylon

The fall and perpetual desolation of Babylon is here predicted, in language matching the grandeur of the theme (51:37-43), as Isaiah had done earlier

(Isaiah 13:17-22). The Medes, leading a great company of nations, are named as the conquerors, (50:9; 51:11; 27, 38)

These two chapters pronouncing the doom of Babylon, were copied in a separate book, and sent to Babylon, in a deputation headed by kinky Zedekiah, seven years before Nebuchadnezzar burned the city of Jerusalem (51:59-64). The book was to be read publicly, and then, in solemn ceremony, sunk in the Euphrates river, with these words, "Thus shall Babylon sink, and not rise.

In Chapter 51: 59 - 64 we are given the date of these two chapters and the use to be made of them. The date is the 4th year of the reign of Zedekiah, when the power of Babylon was at its highest. Jeremiah in prophecy saw the future as actually having taken place.

In prose and poetry Jeremiah draws concentric circles around a central topic: the destruction of Babylon, the necessary preliminary to the restoration of exiled Israel, and the reasons for that destruction. Babylon has served the purpose given to it by the Lord, namely, chastening rebellious Israel so that believing Israel would continue to serve its purpose and role in the Lord's plan of salvation.

In these two chapters we have a good example of the way Hebrew poetry was arranged - not in straight progression of thought' but in concentric circles, each new circle adding a new truth to the fact previously presented and often repeated.

Chapter 52

The Captivity of Judah

Chapter 52 gives us an account of Zedekiah, the last king of Judah, of the destruction of Jerusalem, of some additional deportations, and of the release of Jehoiachin from prison. Much of the same material - with some additions and with some deletions is in 2 Kings 24: 18 to 25: 30.

Did Jeremiah, or did Baruch, or did someone else write this chapter? Jeremiah 51: 64b seems to indicate that Jeremiah did not. According to one tradition, the Jews slew Jeremiah in Egypt. According to a Jewish tradition Nebuchadnezzar, after conquering Egypt, 568-567 BC, took Jeremiah and Baruch to Babylon, where Jeremiah died peacefully. He could have lived to see the release of Jehoiachin from prison by Evil-Merodach, the son and successor of Nebuchadnezzar, 562-561 BC.

In Chapter 44: 28, we have the words, "All the remnant of Judah, who came to the land of Egypt to live, shall know whose word will stand, mine or theirs." This chapter 52 is the final statement declaring that the word of the Lord is true and that His word stood.

For more graphic detail of this even see also 2 Kings 24, 25.

Concluding Note

The one great truth that we are to learn from the Book of Jeremiah is that we are to listen to the Word of the Lord, obey His voice, believe in Him, and worship and follow Him in faithful service. To all who do belongs the enjoyment of the Lord's blessings. However, if we, like the kings of Judah and the majority of the people, refuse to obey the voice of the Lord, we can expect a judgment similar to what befell Judah and Jerusalem

May we as individuals and as a nation learn the message of Jeremiah. May we be modern Jeremiahs, people of obedience to the Lord.

Prophecy in the Book of Jeremiah

Jeremiah preached from about 628 BC to 586 BC (about 2600 years ago) in Jerusalem. During that time, Babylon took control of Jerusalem. Babylon began taking Jews as captives to Babylon as early as 605 BC and 597 BC. Babylon destroyed Jerusalem in 586 BC. Jeremiah prophesied that the Jews would be scattered from their homeland and persecuted. He also said that God would protect the Jews from total destruction and that they would one day return to their homeland and that the second Israel would be more impressive than the first. Today, we can see with our own eyes that the Jews have indeed survived widespread persecutions and that they have re-established Israel (in 1948), after 19 centuries of exile and persecutions throughout the world..

Subject	Prophecy	Fulfillment
The Messiah would be a descendant of David.	Jeremiah 23:5-6a	Luke 3:23-31
The Messiah would be God.	Jeremiah 23:5-6b	John 13:13
The Messiah would be both God and Man.	Jeremiah 23:5-6c	1 Timothy 3:16
The Messiah would be born of a virgin.	Jeremiah 31:22	Matthew 1:18-20

The Messiah would be the new covenant.	Jeremiah 31:31	Matthew 26:28
The Messiah would be a descendant of David.	Jeremiah 33:14-15	Luke 3:23-31

The Messiah would be a descendant of David

Prophecy

Jeremiah 23:5-6b

"5 Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. 6 In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS."

Similar prophecies

Subject	Prophecy	Fulfillment
The Messiah would be the creator of all.	Psalm 102:25-27b	John 1:3
The Messiah would be Lord.	Psalm 110:1a	Matthew 22:41-45
The Messiah would be holy.	Daniel 9:24b	Luke 1:35
The Messiah would be God.	Psalm 45:6-7b	Hebrews 1:8-9
The Messiah would be God.	Isaiah 7:14c	John 12:45
The Messiah would be God.	Isaiah 40:3c	John 10:30
The Messiah would be God.	Jeremiah 23:5-6b	John 13:13
The Messiah would be both God and man.	Jeremiah 23:5-6c	1 Timothy 3:16
The Messiah would be both God and man (the "Mighty God").	Isaiah 9:6d	John 10:30
The Messiah would be God	Zechariah 11:10-11b	John 14:7
The Messiah would be God	Zechariah 11:12-13d	John 12:45
The Messiah would be both God and man.	Zechariah 12:10b	John 10:30

The Messiah would be both God and man   Zechariah 13:7c   John 14:9

Fulfilment

John 13:13
"Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am."

John 12:45

" And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me."

Additional Fulfilment Examples

Matthew 22:41-45, Mark 12:35-37, Luke 20:41-44, John 1:1-14, 8:58, 10:30, 10:38, 14:7-10, Romans 9:5, Philippians 2:5-7 Colossians 2:9 1 Timothy 3:16, Titus 2:13, Hebrews 1:3, 1:8-9, 2:14

The Hebrew text for the name LORD used in Jeremiah 23:6 is "YHWH" (commonly rendered "Jehovah"), clearly referring to God (and not a social position of man). The King described here is called, "THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS," signifying his deity.[1] Whereas Israel's good kings and bad kings alike were sinners, this descendent of David would be holy and righteous.

In Jeremiah 33:16, the same name, "THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS" is applied to Jerusalem. Some point to this to say that the name in Jeremiah 23:6 also refers to Jerusalem. However, given the geneological reference of Jeremiah 23:5 and the fact that Jeremiah presents this righteous King as a contrast to the wicked Kings of the past, this verse clearly indicates a person and not a city.[2] Why is the name "THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS" given to Jerusalem in Jeremiah 33:16? Because One who rules with righteousness like no other is upon the throne in Zion. Jerusalem will be ruled by a just and righteousness King and the city itself will take on these attributes. The city is immersed in the

[1] Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum in his book "Messianic Christology" writes that while there were people throughout the scriptures who had names with "Jehovah" (rendered "LORD" in the King James translation) in them, "It needs to be realized that in none of these cases are all four of the letters YHVH found. Usually twos letters are found, sometimes three, but nowhere are all four letters of the name of God ever used in relation to a human being."

[2] Dr. James Smith, in his book "What the Bible Teaches About the Promised Messiah" notes that the Jews interpreted "THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS" in Jeremiah 23:6 as personal Messianic title, and that it is recorded as such in the Targum, Midrash, and Talmud.

glorious radiance of a holy King and cannot help but be transformed and reflect the righteousness bestowed upon it. Who is this king? It is Jesus, King Messiah, our savior, and our righteousness (1 Corinthians 1:30). All believers in the saving work of Jesus become His bride, and just as a bride takes on the name of her husband, so Jerusalem takes on the name of her King, "THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS."

The Messiah would be God

Prophecy

Jeremiah 23:5-6b

" 5 Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. 6 In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS."

Similar prophecies

Subject	Prophecy	Fulfillment
The Messiah would be a descendant of Shem.	Genesis 9:26	Luke 3:23-36
The Messiah would be a descendant of Abraham.	Genesis 12:3	Matthew 1:1
The Messiah would be a descendant of Abraham.	Genesis 18:17-18a	Matthew 1:1
The Messiah would be a descendant of Abraham.	Genesis 22:18a	Galations 3:16
The Messiah would be a descendant of Isaac.	Genesis 17:19	Luke 3:23-34
The Messiah would be a descendant of Isaac.	Genesis 21:12	Luke 3:23-34
The Messiah would be a descendant of Isaac.	Genesis 26:4	Luke 3:23-34
The Messiah would be a descendant of Jacob.	Genesis 28:14a	Luke 3:23-34
The Messiah would be a descendant of Judah.	Genesis 49:10a	Luke 3:23-33

The Messiah would be a descendant of Judah.	1 Chronicles 5:2	Luke 3:23-33
The Messiah would be a descendant of Boaz & Ruth.	Ruth 4:12-17	Luke 3:23-32
The Messiah would be a descendant of Jesse.	Isaiah 11:1a	Luke 3:23-32
The Messiah would be a descendant of Jesse.	Isaiah 11:10a	Luke 3:23-32
The Messiah would be a descendant of David.	2 Samuel 7:12-13	Matthew 1:1
The Messiah would be a descendant of David.	2 Samuel 7:16	Matthew 1:1
The Messiah would be a descendant of David.	1 Chronicles 17:11-12a	Luke 3:23-31
The Messiah would be a descendant of David.	Psalm 89:3-4	Matthew 1:1
The Messiah would be a descendant of David.	Psalm 89:29	Matthew 1:1
The Messiah would be a descendant of David.	Psalm 89:35-36	Matthew 1:1
The Messiah would be a descendant of David.	Psalm 132:11	Matthew 1:1
The Messiah would be a descendant of David.	Psalm 132:17	Matthew 1:1
The Messiah would be a descendant of David.	Isaiah 7:13-14	Matthew 1:1
The Messiah would be a descendant of David.	Isaiah 9:7	Matthew 1:1
The Messiah would be a descendant of David.	Jeremiah 23:5-6a	Luke 3:23-31
The Messiah would be a descendant of David.	Jeremiah 33:14-15	Luke 3:23-31
The Messiah would be a descendant of David.	Ezekiel 17:22-24	Luke 3:23-31
The Messiah would be a descendant of David.	Ezekiel 34:23-24	Matthew 1:1
The Messiah would be a descendant of Zerubbabel.	Haggai 2:23	Luke 3:23-27

Fulfilment

John 13:13

"Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am."

John 12:45

" And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me."

Additional Fulfilment Examples: Matthew 1:1-17

Jeremiah 23:1-8 describes the future millennial reign of Jesus as King Messiah. In contrast to the wicked shepherds of Jeremiah's day (Kings Jehoahaz, Jehoiachim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah) and those throughout history that have lead the flock of Israel into sin, idolatry, and ultimately captivity, this King will be a good shepherd that rules with wisdom and justice. Whereas Israel's evil rulers have caused its people to be scattered, Jesus says in Matthew 15:24 "... I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Verse 4 says "And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them..."[3] and in John 21:16-17 Jesus speaking to Peter (and all those who become His disciples by accepting Him as Lord) says, "Feed my sheep." The people will be completely regathered to Israel and live safely under the multitude of blessing that the Lord bestows upon them and the land. (Reference a similar description of Jeremiah 23:1-8 in Ezekiel Chapter 34).

Verse 5 describes the royal "Branch" from the line of David,[4] He will be the good and righteous King who will rule out of Zion. In Luke 1:32-33 the angel

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[3]These good shepherds are typified in post-Babylonian captivity leaders like Zerubbabel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and others but more fully realized in the saints that will rule with Jesus, King Messiah in the age to come.

[4] Branch, a Messianic metaphor, literally meaning "shoot" or "sprout," and signifying the new life that Messiah brings to the Davidic monarchy that was presumed dead, and the new life that He brings to all mankind. Isaiah 4:2 speaks of the Branch of the Lord, Isaiah 11:1-5 describes the Spirit-filled Branch, Jeremiah 23:5 and 33:15 presents the Branch, the King from the royal line of David, Zechariah 3:8 outlines God's "Servant," the Branch, and Zechariah 6:12 offers the "Man" who is the Branch. David Baron in his classic book "Rays of Messiah's Glory" states that the Hebrew word translated in English as "Branch" in Jeremiah 23:5 means "son" in its literal and natural sense. He goes on to say that this is the verse most generally quoted by Jews as proof that the Messiah is to be the Son of David.

that visited Mary before Jesus was born spoke of Jesus' destiny to reign on the throne of David, "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." Messiah is to be descendent of David, a continuation of God's promise that Nathan delivered to David in 2 Samuel 7:12-13. The phrase "... and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth," this will occur upon the second coming of Jesus when His enemies are made a footstool for His feet (Psalm 110:1), and on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS (Revelation 19:16).

Verse 6, "... The Lord our Righteousness," 1) The name "the Lord" speaks to this King's divinity, see Jeremiah 23:6, "The Messiah would be God." 2) The second part of the name".. our Righteousness," in John 10:11 Jesus says, "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." By giving His life for us to satisfy the judgment that we owed, we were justified and made righteous before God, "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Corinthians 5:21).

The Messiah would be both God and Man

Prophecy

Jeremiah 23:5-6c

" 5 Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. 6 In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS."

Similar prophesies

Subject	Prophecy	Fulfillment
The Messiah would be the creator of all.	Psalm 102:25-27b	John 1:3
The Messiah would be Lord.	Psalm 110:1a	Matthew 22:41-45
The Messiah would be holy.	Daniel 9:24b	Luke 1:35
The Messiah would be God.	Psalm 45:6-7b	Hebrews 1:8-9
The Messiah would be God.	Isaiah 7:14c	John 12:45

The Messiah would be God.	Isaiah 40:3c	John 10:30
The Messiah would be God.	Jeremiah 23:5-6b	John 13:13
The Messiah would be both God and man.	Jeremiah 23:5-6c	1 Timothy 3:16
The Messiah would be both God and man (the "Mighty God").	Isaiah 9:6d	John 10:30
The Messiah would be God	Zechariah 11:10-11b	John 14:7
The Messiah would be God	Zechariah 11:12-13d	John 12:45
The Messiah would be both God and man.	Zechariah 12:10b	John 10:30
The Messiah would be both God and man	Zechariah 13:7c	John 14:9

Fulfilment

1 Timothy 3:16

"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."

Colossians 2:9

"For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

Additional Fulfilment Examples

Matthew 22:41-45, Mark 12:35-37, Luke 20:41-44, John 1:1-14, 8:58, 10:30, 10:38, 13:13, 12:45, 14:7-10, Romans 9:5, Philippians 2:5-7 Titus 2:13, Hebrews 1:3, 1:8-9, 2:14

Jeremiah 23:6 tells us that Messiah is to be God, and yet verse 5 states that he will be a human descendent of the line of David. This is reminiscent of Psalm 110:1, which Jesus referenced when he said to the Pharisees, "If David then calls him "Lord," how is he his son?" (Matthew 22:45).

The Messiah would be born of a virgin.

Prophecy

Jeremiah 31:22

"How long wilt thou go about, O thou backsliding daughter? For the Lord hath created a new thing in the earth, A woman shall compass a man."

Subject	Prophecy	Fulfilment
The Messiah would be born of the "seed" of a woman.	Genesis 3:15a	Luke 1:34-35
The Messiah would be born of a virgin.	Isaiah 7:14a	Luke 1:34-35
The Messiah would be born of a virgin.	Jeremiah 31:22	Matthew 1:18-20
The Messiah would be Immanuel, "God with us."	Isaiah 7:14b	Matthew 1:21-23
The Messiah would be called by his name before he was born.	Isaiah 49:1c	Luke 1:30-31
The Messiah would be born in Bethlehem.	Micah 5:2a	Matthew 2:1-2
The birth of the Messiah.	Isaiah 9:6a	Luke 2:11
The Messiah would be protected by God.	Isaiah 49:2b	Matthew 2:13-15
The Messiah would grow up in a poor family.	Isaiah 11:1b	Luke 2:7
The Messiah would grow up in a poor family.	Isaiah 53:2a	Luke 2:7
The Messiah would be aware of his Father from his youth.	Psalm 22:9	Luke 2:40

Fulfilment

Matthew 1:18-20

" 18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of
the Holy Ghost. 19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to
make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily. 20 But while he
thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost."

Additional Fulfilment Examples

Luke 1:34-35, John 1:14, Galatians 4:4

That a woman should "compass a man," was a "new," and from the Lord. The Hebrew word used here for "man" is "gerber," which means a champion, hero, warrior, mighty man. A form of this same word, "El Gibbor" meaning "the Mighty God," or "God the Champion" is used in Isaiah 9:6, which is a Messianic prophecy.

The Messiah would be the New Covenant

Prophesy

Jeremiah 31:31

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:"

Subject	Prophecy	Fulfilment
The Messiah would be the messenger of the new covenant.	Malachi 3:1c	Luke 4:43
The Messiah would be the new covenant.	Isaiah 42:6c	Matthew 26:28
The Messiah would be the new covenant.	Jeremiah 31:31	Matthew 26:28
The Messiah would come to make an end to sins.	Daniel 9:24a	Galations 1:3-5
The Messiah would provide freedom from the bondage of sin and death.	Isaiah 61:1-2c	John 8:31-32
The Messiah would proclaim a period of grace.	Isaiah 61:1-2d	John 5:24
The Messiah would die for the sins of the world.	Isaiah 53:8d	1 John 2:2
The Messiah would die for the sins of the world.	Daniel 9:26b	Hebrews 2:9
The Messiah would give up his life to save mankind.	Isaiah 53:12b	Luke 23:46
The Messiah would be as a sacrificial lamb.	Isaiah 53:7c	John 1:29
The Messiah would be an offering for sin.	Isaiah 53:10b	Matthew 20:28
The Messiah's offering of himself would replace all sacrifices.	Psalm 40:6-8a	Hebrews 10:10-13

The Messiah's blood would be shed to make atonement for all.	Isaiah 52:15	Revelation 1:5
The Messiah would be the sin-bearer for all mankind.	Isaiah 53:6a	Galations 1:4
The Messiah would be the sin-bearer for all mankind.	Isaiah 53:11d	Hebrews 9:28
The Messiah would be the sin-bearer for all mankind.	Isaiah 53:12d	2 Corinthians 5:21
The Messiah would bear and carry upon himself the sins of the world.	Isaiah 53:4b	1 Peter 2:24
The Messiah would bear the penalty for mankind's transgressions.	Isaiah 53:5a	Luke 23:33
The Messiah's sacrifice would provide peace between man and God.	Isaiah 53:5b	Colossians 1:20
The Messiah would justify man before God.	Isaiah 53:11c	Romans 5:8-9
The Messiah would be the intercessor between man and God.	Isaiah 59:15-16b	Matthew 10:32-33
The Messiah would intercede to God in behalf of mankind.	Isaiah 53:12e	Luke 23:34
The Messiah's atonement would enable believers to be his brethren.	Psalm 22:22	Hebrews 2:10-12
The Messiah would come to provide salvation.	Isaiah 59:15-16a	John 6:40
The Messiah would bring salvation.	Zechariah 9:9d	Luke 19:10
The Messiah would have a ministry to the "poor," the believing remnant.	Zechariah 11:7	Matthew 9:35-36
The Messiah would offer salvation to all mankind.	Joel 2:32	Romans 10:12-13
The Messiah would come to bring Israel back to God.	Isaiah 49:5b	Matthew 15:24
The Messiah would come to Zion as their Redeemer.	Isaiah 59:20	Luke 2:38
Those who refused to listen to the Messiah would be judged.	Deuteronomy 18:15-19c	John 12:48-50
The Messiah would reject those who did not believe in him.	Psalm 2:12b	John 3:36

Fulfilment

Matthew 26:28

"For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

Additional Fulfilment Examples

Mark 14:24, Luke 22:20, Hebrews 8:8-13, 10:14-22, 12:24

The Messiah would be a descendant of David

Prophecy

Jeremiah 33:14-15

" 14 Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. 15 In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land."

Subject	Prophecy	Fulfillment
The Messiah would be a descendant of Shem.	Genesis 9:26	Luke 3:23-36
The Messiah would be a descendant of Abraham.	Genesis 12:3	Matthew 1:1
The Messiah would be a descendant of Abraham.	Genesis 18:17-18a	Matthew 1:1
The Messiah would be a descendant of Abraham.	Genesis 22:18a	Galations 3:16
The Messiah would be a descendant of Isaac.	Genesis 17:19	Luke 3:23-34
The Messiah would be a descendant of Isaac.	Genesis 21:12	Luke 3:23-34
The Messiah would be a descendant of Isaac.	Genesis 26:4	Luke 3:23-34
The Messiah would be a descendant of Jacob.	Genesis 28:14a	Luke 3:23-34
The Messiah would be a descendant of Judah.	Genesis 49:10a	Luke 3:23-33
The Messiah would be a descendant of	1 Chronicles 5:2	Luke 3:23-

Judah.		33
The Messiah would be a descendant of Boaz & Ruth.	Ruth 4:12-17	Luke 3:23-32
The Messiah would be a descendant of Jesse.	Isaiah 11:1a	Luke 3:23-32
The Messiah would be a descendant of Jesse.	Isaiah 11:10a	Luke 3:23-32
The Messiah would be a descendant of David.	2 Samuel 7:12-13	Matthew 1:1
The Messiah would be a descendant of David.	2 Samuel 7:16	Matthew 1:1
The Messiah would be a descendant of David.	1 Chronicles 17:11-12a	Luke 3:23-31
The Messiah would be a descendant of David.	Psalm 89:3-4	Matthew 1:1
The Messiah would be a descendant of David.	Psalm 89:29	Matthew 1:1
The Messiah would be a descendant of David.	Psalm 89:35-36	Matthew 1:1
The Messiah would be a descendant of David.	Psalm 132:11	Matthew 1:1
The Messiah would be a descendant of David.	Psalm 132:17	Matthew 1:1
The Messiah would be a descendant of David.	Isaiah 7:13-14	Matthew 1:1
The Messiah would be a descendant of David.	Isaiah 9:7	Matthew 1:1
The Messiah would be a descendant of David.	Jeremiah 23:5-6a	Luke 3:23-31
The Messiah would be a descendant of David.	Jeremiah 33:14-15	Luke 3:23-31
The Messiah would be a descendant of David.	Ezekiel 17:22-24	Luke 3:23-31
The Messiah would be a descendant of David.	Ezekiel 34:23-24	Matthew 1:1
The Messiah would be a descendant of Zerubbabel.	Haggai 2:23	Luke 3:23-27

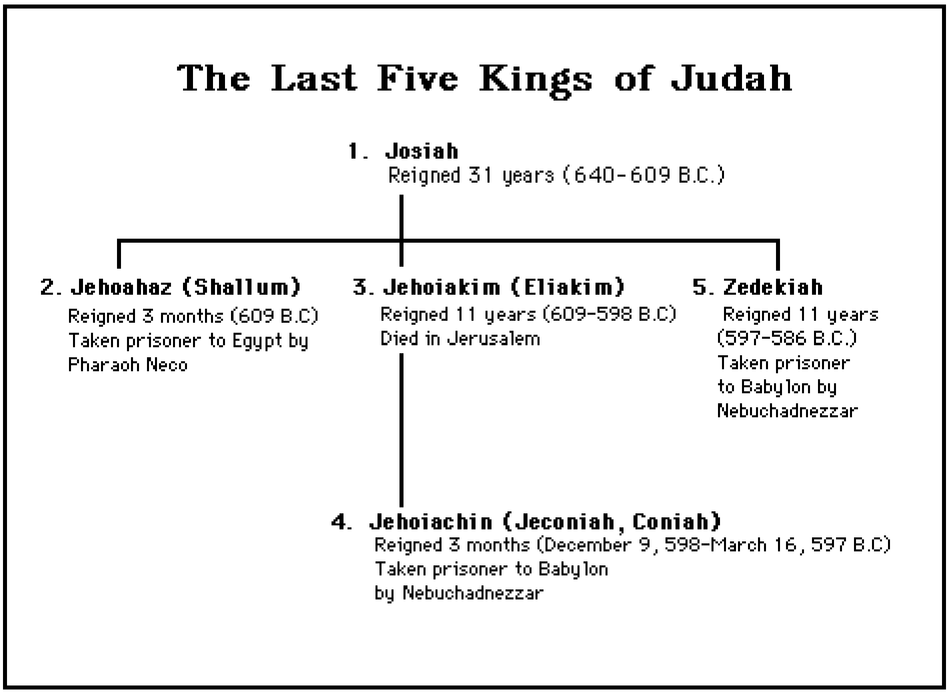
Fulfilment

Luke 3:23-31

"Jesus... the son of David..."

Additional Fulfilment Examples

Matthew 1:1-17



A Message for Judah's Kings

(Jeremiah 22)

God's accounting for the kings of Judah, showing their virtually unbroken failure.

This is what the LORD said to me: "Go over and speak directly to the king of Judah. Say to him, 2 'Listen to this message from the LORD, you king of Judah, sitting on David's throne. Let your attendants and your people listen, too. 3 This is what the LORD says: Be fair-minded and just. Do what is right! Help those who have been robbed; rescue them from their oppressors. Quit your evil deeds! Do not mistreat foreigners, orphans, and widows. Stop murdering the innocent! 4 If you obey me, there will always be a descendant of David sitting on the throne here in Jerusalem. The king will ride through the palace gates in chariots and on horses, with his parade of attendants and subjects. 5 But if you refuse to pay attention to this warning, I swear by my own name, says the LORD, that this palace will become a pile of rubble.'"

The Book of Jeremiah

Focus	Jeremiah's Sermons						Jeremiah's Experiences					
Divisions	Judah in Jeopardy 1 6	Judah in Idolatry 7 10	Judah in Rebellion 11 15	Judah in the Potter's Hands 16 20	Judah in a Leadership Crisis 21 25	Judah in Opposition 26 29	Hope Amidst Judgment 30 33	Before the Fall 34 36	During the Fall 37 39	After the Fall 40 45	Gentiles in Judgment 46 51	Fall of Jerusalem 52 52
Topics	Judgment						Hope	Judgment				
	Preaching							Portrayal			Prophecy	
Place	Judah											Babylon
Time	About 42 Years (627-585 B.C.)											
Author	The Prophet Jeremiah											



The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah of the priests who were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin

Commentary on the Book of Jeremiah

by Arno C. Gaebelein (Public Domain)

Introduction along Arno C. Gaebelein

This book starts with information concerning the person of Jeremiah, the time when he was called to the office of a prophet, and the period of time during which he exercised his ministry.

Jeremiah means "exalted of the Lord," or, "established by the Lord." He was the son of Hilkiah. Some have identified the father of Jeremiah with the high-priest Hilkiah, who was such a power in Josiah's great reformation work. This is incorrect. The high-priest Hilkiah was of the line of Eleazar, as recorded in 1 Chronicles 6:4; 1 Chronicles 6:13. The father of the prophet Jeremiah was, we read in the first verse of this book, of the priests that were in Anathoth; the priests who lived there were of the line of Ithamar. (See 1 Kings 2:26; 1 Chronicles 24:3; 1 Chronicles 24:6.) Anathoth, the home of Jeremiah, was in Benjamin, about three miles northeast of Jerusalem.

The first time the Word of the Lord came to young Jeremiah, for he was but a child, was in the thirteenth year of King Josiah, or just a year after the eventful reformation accomplished by that good man. We know but little of the activity of the prophet during the subsequent reign of Josiah. Only one message is timed “in the day of Josiah the king” (Jeremiah 3:6). In the history of that illustrious king of Judah, we read nothing of Jeremiah, with the exception of the brief statement “and Jeremiah lamented for Josiah” 2 Chronicles 35:25. It seems that the third verse gives the period covering the larger part of the ministry of this prophet. The Word of the Lord came unto him “also in the days of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, king of Judah, unto the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah, the son of Josiah, the king of Judah, unto the carrying away of Jerusalem captive in the fifth month.”

The book which bears this prophet’s name abounds in personal allusions. In fact no other prophet in his character, in the exercise of his soul, and in his experience is so fully portrayed as Jeremiah; not even Ezekiel and Daniel whom, with Habakkuk and Zephaniah, were his contemporaries. The study of this great man of God is deeply interesting.

He has been called “the weeping prophet” and is generally known by that name. No other prophet wept like Jeremiah. That outburst in his lamentations, “For these things I weep; mine eye, mine eye, runneth down with water” Lamentations 1:16 shows how tender hearted he was, and how his tears flowed freely. But he was something else beside the weeping prophet. He was a man of great courage, with the boldness of a lion. In the presence of His Lord he was prostrate and broken, one who trembled at His Word, filled with godly fear. He was a man of prayer and faith in the Lord and faithful in the discharge of his great commission.

His Life of Service and Suffering

His lot was one of great solitude; he was divinely commanded to remain unmarried (Jeremiah 16:2). He was forbidden to enter the house of joy and feasting (Jeremiah 16:8). Reproach and derision were his daily portion (Jeremiah 20:8). He was betrayed by his own kindred (Jeremiah 12:6) , and his fellow citizens at Anathoth wanted to kill him (Jeremiah 11:21). Then, in the first part of his book, we read of the inner struggles he had, the spiritual conflict, when everybody was against him. In the bitterness of his spirit he spoke of himself as “a man of contention to the whole earth” (Jeremiah 15:10). He even doubted whether his whole work was not a delusion and a lie (Jeremiah 20:7) , and like Job he cursed the day of his birth (Jeremiah 20:14). When the Chaldeans came to the front and Jeremiah heard from the Lord that

Nebuchadnezzar was called as His servant to receive the dominion from His hands (Jeremiah 27:6) , Jeremiah urged submission. This stamped him as a traitor. False prophets appeared who contradicted him with their false messages; he committed his cause to the Lord. On one occasion when the temple courts were filled with thousands of worshippers, he appeared and uttered the message that Jerusalem would be a curse, that the temple should share the fate of the tabernacle at Shiloh (Jeremiah 26:6). Then the great conflict began. The priests, the false prophets and the people demanded his death (Jeremiah 26:8). The Lord graciously protected him through chosen instruments. Still greater were his sufferings under Zedekiah. His struggles with the false prophets continued; they called him a madman (Jeremiah 29:26) , and urged his imprisonment. He then appeared in the streets of Jerusalem with bonds and yokes upon his neck (Jeremiah 27:2) , showing the coming fate of Judah. A false prophet broke the offensive symbol and gave a lying message that the Chaldeans should be destroyed within two years. Then the Egyptian army approached, and the Chaldeans hastened away; it created a dangerous condition for Jeremiah. He sought to escape to his home town Anathoth; it was discovered, and he was charged with falling to the Chaldeans as others did (Jeremiah 37:14). In spite of his denial, he was thrown into a dungeon. Later he was thrown into the prison pit by the princes to die there. From that horrible fate he was again mercifully delivered. When the city fell, Nebuchadnezzar protected his person (Jeremiah 39:11) , and after being carried away with other captives as far as Ramah, he set him free. It was left to him whether he would go to Babylon to live under the special protection of the king, or remain in the land with the governor Gedaliah. He chose the latter. But Gedaliah was murdered by Ishmael and his associates. Then the people forced him to emigrate with them to Egypt. The last glimpse of the prophet’s life we have of him is in Tahpanhes, uttering there a final protest and a great message. Nothing is known of the details of his death.

“He is pre-eminently the man that hath seen afflictions Lamentations 3:1. He witnessed the departure one by one, of all his hopes of national reformation and deliverance. He is forced to appear as a prophet of evil, dashing to the ground the false hopes with which the people were deluded. Other prophets, Samuel, Elisha, Isaiah, had been sent to arouse the people to resistance. He has been brought to the conclusion, bitter as it is, that the only safety for his people lies in their acceptance of that which they think is the worst evil, that brings on him the charge of treachery. If it were not for his trust in the God of Israel, for his hope of a better future to be brought out of all this chaos and darkness, his heart would fail within him. But that vision is clear and bright, and it gives to him, almost as fully as to Isaiah, the character of a prophet of glory. He is not merely an Israelite looking forward to a national restoration. In the midst of all the woes he utters against the nearby nations, he has hopes and promises for them also. In

that stormy sunset of prophecy, he beholds, in spirit, the dawn of a brighter day. He sees that, if there is any hope of salvation for his people, it cannot be by a return to the old system and the old ordinances, divine though they had once been. There must be a New Covenant. That word, destined to be so full of power for after ages, appears first in his prophecies. The relations between the people and the Lord of Israel, between mankind and God, must rest, not on an outward law, with its requirements of obedience, but on an inward fellowship with Him and the consciousness of entire dependence. For all this the prophet saw clearly there must be a personal centre. The kingdom of God could not be manifested but through a perfect righteous man, ruling over men on earth. They gather round the person of Christ, the Jehovah Zdidkenu--THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, the Son of David, Israel's coming king."

The Authorship of Jeremiah

The book begins with "The words of Jeremiah," and it closes with Jeremiah 51:64 with the statement, "thus far are the words of Jeremiah." The final chapter is an addition of a historical character. That Jeremiah must be the author of the greater part of the book is proven by the many personal references which only the prophet himself could have written. No other prophet was so frequently commanded to write as Jeremiah was. "Write thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee in a book" (Jeremiah 30:2). "Take thee the roll of a book and write therein all the words that I have spoken" (Jeremiah 36:2). Then Baruch witnessed that he wrote all these words which came from Jeremiah's lips in a book (Jeremiah 36:18) ; and when the roll was burned the Lord said, "Take thee again another roll, and write in it all the former words that were in the first roll" (Jeremiah 36:28). "So Jeremiah wrote in a book" (Jeremiah 51:60). Who are the men who try to make us believe that Jeremiah did not write these words? Baruch, his secretary, who took the dictations from the lips of the prophet (Jeremiah 36:27) may have arranged, under the direction of Jeremiah, the different prophecies. The language used is the language of his time and is tinged with Aramaic. The style does not compare with that of Isaiah.

There are, of course, many difficulties in connection with the text. For instance, the Greek version (the Septuagint) differs more widely from the Hebrew than that of any other portion of the Old Testament. Numerous passages like Jeremiah 7:1-2; Jeremiah 17:1-4; Jeremiah 23:14-26, etc., are omitted in the Greek version. Inasmuch as the Hebrew is the oldest and the Septuagint was made from the Hebrew, the latter is the correct text. The critical school has made much out of these apparent difficulties and the disorder and unchronological character of the book. Therefore Jeremiah has suffered just as much in the

dissecting room of the destructive critics as Isaiah and Moses. Thus Peake in his commentary on Jeremiah uses nine symbolic letters to show which is which.

J. Which stands for the prophecies of which Jeremiah is most likely the author. S. This stands for certain supplementers. JS. This stands for the words of Jeremiah worked over by a supplementer; nobody knows who he was. B. This means Baruch and his production. BS. This means that Baruch's words were supplemented by some more unknown supplementers. R. This stands for Redactor, whoever he was. I. Here we have an unknown author who, according to the critics, wrote Jeremiah 10:1-6. K. Here is another unknown gentleman, the author of Jeremiah 17:19, etc. E. This letter denotes extracts from 2 Kings.

It is of little interest to quote the ramblings of Duhm, Ryssell, Hitzig, Renan and others about the authorship and compilation of Jeremiah. Not one of these scholars agrees. They have theories but no certainties. How simple it is to believe the beginning and the end of this book, that here are "the words of Jeremiah. And though King Jehoiakim tried to destroy these words, they still live and they will live on in our days, in spite of the successors of the wicked king, the professors of apostasy, who are trying to give Christendom an abridged Bible.

That the book appears disjointed and is unchronological is no argument against its authenticity. The Companion Bible gives the following: "The prophecies of Jeremiah do not profess to be given in chronological order; nor is there any reason why they should be so given. Why, we ask, should modern critics first assume that they ought to be, and then condemn them because they are not? It is the historical portions, which concern Jehoiakim and Zedekiah that are chiefly so affected; and who was Jehoiakim that his history should be of any importance? Was it not he who cut up the Word of the Lord with a penknife and cast it into the fire? Why should not his history be cut up? Zedekiah rejected the same Word of Jehovah. Why should his history be respected?"

The Message of Jeremiah

His message is first a message which charges the people with having forsaken Jehovah. The sins of the people are uncovered, especially the sins of false worship and idolatry. Connected with this are the appeals to return unto the Lord with the promises of the mercy of Jehovah. The impenitent condition of the people is foreseen and judgment is announced. Then follow the messages which make known Jehovah's determination to punish Jerusalem, and further announcement of the impending judgment. But while Jeremiah gave the messages of warning of the coming disaster of Nebuchadnezzar's conquest, he

also received prophecies concerning the future. Thus in chapter 23 we find a great prophecy of restoration. He speaks of the days when the righteous Branch, the King, is to reign, when Judah will be saved and Israel dwell safely. Who that King is, every believer knows. His name is “Jehovah our Righteousness.” It is the Lord Jesus Christ. Greater still is the great prophecy contained in chapters 30-31. Here we find the prophecy of the new covenant to be made with the house of Judah and the house of Israel. Chapter 33 contains another prophetic restoration message. Chapters 46-51 contain prophecies against Gentile nations.

The personal experience and the sufferings of this prophet are of a typical character, like the experiences and sufferings of other men of God in the Old Testament. The following passages make Jeremiah a type of Christ: Jeremiah 11:19; Jeremiah 13:17; Jeremiah 20:7 (last sentence) , Jeremiah 20:10; Jeremiah 26:11; Jeremiah 26:15; Lamentations 1:12; Lamentations 3:14.

The Divisions of Jeremiah

We have already referred in the introduction to the charge made by the critics that the book of Jeremiah is unchronological and lacks proper arrangement. Says one critic, “as the book now stands, there is nothing but the wildest confusion, a preposterous jumbling together of prophecies of different dates.” Attempts have therefore been made to reconstruct the book on a chronological basis, but none of these are satisfactory. on the other hand, some able scholars have come to the conclusion that we possess the book substantially in the same state as that in which it left the hands of the prophet and his secretary Baruch. We believe this is correct. If Jeremiah was guided by the Spirit of God in writing and dictating his great messages, he wrote them down just as the Spirit wanted to have them written down. If some things appear disjointed, or out of the chronological order, there must be some wise purpose in it. We shall discover this as we proceed with the analysis and in our annotations.

To enjoy fully the book of Jeremiah a good knowledge of the historical setting is eminently necessary. We have given many references in the annotations which will help in this direction.

We call attention first to the two main divisions of the book. The first constitutes the greater part of the book, from chapters 1-45. This portion has the full ministry of the prophet during the reign of Josiah, the brief reign of Jehoahaz (Shallum; see Jeremiah 22:10-12) ; the reign of Jehoiakim, Jehoiakin (Coniah) and the reign of Zedekiah. The second division contains the prophecies against Gentile nations, that is chapters 46-51. The last chapter is an appendix

corresponding in its history to 2 Kings. Some have looked upon this appendix as the introduction to the Lamentations.

The prophecies historically according to the reign of Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiakin, and Zedekiah may be arranged as follows:

Under the Reign of Josiah. The call of Jeremiah and probably the greater part of chapters 1-6.

Under the Reign of Jehoahaz. The prophecy contained in Jeremiah 22:10-12.

Under the Reign of Jehoiakim. Chapters 7-20, 25-26, 35-36, 46:1-12, 47, 49.

Under the Reign of Jehoiakim (Coniah, Jeconiah). Chapters 22 and 23.

Under the Reign of Zedekiah. Chapters 21, 24, 27, 28, 29, 30-34, 37-44, 46:13-28, 50 and 51.

We make the following divisions for the study of this book:

I. THE PROPHET’S CALL TO REPENTANCE, THE NATION’S IMPENITENCE, AND THE JUDGMENT ANNOUNCED (1-13)

II. THE PROPHET’S MINISTRY BEFORE THE FALL OF JERUSALEM, THE PROPHECIES OF JUDGMENT AND RESTORATION, THE PERSONAL HISTORY OF JEREMIAH, HIS FAITHFULNESS AND HIS SUFFERING (14-39)

III. AFTER THE FALL OF JERUSALEM (40-45)

IV. THE PROPHECIES CONCERNING THE GENTILE NATIONS (46-51)

V. THE HISTORICAL APPENDIX (52:1-34)

The different subdivisions will appear in the analysis.

I. The Call to Repentance, the impenitence of the people, and the judgment announced

Chapter 1

The Call of the Prophet

*1. The introduction (*Jeremiah 1:1-3*)*

*2. The divine call (*Jeremiah 1:4-10*)*

*3. The renewed call and the first visions (*Jeremiah 1:11-19*)*

Verses 1-3. Superscription

Jeremiah 1:1-3. The first three verses introduce us to the person of the prophet, to the time the Word of the Lord came unto him, and to the sphere of his ministry. Jeremiah's father, Hilkiah, was a priest of the line of Ithamar; his home was Anathoth of Benjamin. (See general introduction.)

Verses 4-9. Jeremiah's call

Jeremiah 1:4-10. "Then the Word of the LORD came unto me" (Jeremiah 1:4). The prophet is the writer who tells us how he was called into the office of a prophet. A sovereign, omniscient and omnipotent Lord speaks to and informs the young Jeremiah that He knew him, that his call was prenatal. He had been chosen and set apart for the specific work which he now was to undertake. (See Isaiah 49:1; Galatians 1:15-24). What comfort this assuring knowledge must have been to the prophet in his trying ministry, in the persecutions which were his portion and the suffering he passed through! The Lord had called him, the Lord knew all that would take place, and He had the power to sustain him. And he is the same Lord today, and Jeremiah's comfort is still the comfort of His trusting people.

Jeremiah expresses at once his fear. Like Moses Exodus 4:10, he manifests self-distrust. He was but a child, not in the sense of a mere child, but a youth. The Septuagint translates it, "I am too young." After that the Lord encouraged him by the promise of His presence, "I am with thee to deliver thee." Then He touched his mouth and said, "Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth." He was the mouthpiece of Jehovah, Who commissioned him to fulfill a ministry over nations and kingdoms, to announce the overthrow of them by the judgments of the Lord.

Jeremiah 1:11-19. Some think that this renewed call came in the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim. There is nothing in the text to indicate this. The first vision is that of the rod of the almond tree. The Hebrew word for almond is "Shakad," which means to watch, to wake early. It is the first tree which shows the return of spring. It denotes the early fulfilment of the judgment purposes of the Lord. The vision of the seething pot toward the north denotes the coming invasion by the kingdom of the north, that is, the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar. Then follows the renewed commission with a threat in case of disobedience; if his fearfulness would lead him to abandon the commission. More than that, the Lord, knowing the fears of the servant He had called and separated, encouraged him and once more promised him, "I am with thee saith the LORD, to deliver thee."

Chapters 2:1-3:5 - Sermon 1-Sin of the nation

Expostulation and Impeachment

*1. His love and kindness to Jerusalem (*Jeremiah 2:1-3*)*

*2. The unfaithful people (*Jeremiah 2:4-11*)*

*3. The two evils and the results (*Jeremiah 2:12-18*)*

*4. Impeachment (*Jeremiah 2:19-30*)*

*5. Expostulation (*Jeremiah 2:31-37*)*

*6. Jehovah waiting to show mercy (*Jeremiah 3:1-5*)*

2:1-19. A faithful Lord vs. an unfaithful people

Jeremiah 2:1-3. The first message Jeremiah received begins with reminding Jerusalem of the kindness Jehovah bestowed upon the nation in her youth, and how she went after Him in the wilderness. He had separated Israel to belong to Him, to be a holy nation, the first fruits of His increase, which probably means that other nations should through Israel be called to know Him. He was their protector and those who tried to devour them would be held guilty.

Jeremiah 2:4-11. After Jehovah had called to the remembrance of the people the days of her youth, He reproves them for their unfaithfulness. This is the opening chapter of the roll which Jehudi read in the presence of Jehoiakim, which he threw into the fire after he had mutilated it with his penknife (Jeremiah 36:23). The remonstrance starts with a pathetic question: "What iniquity have

your fathers found in Me, that they are gone far from Me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain?" Was there anything unrighteous in Him: had He dealt in a treacherous way? Was the fault in Jehovah that they had left Him? They had not thought on His faithfulness as He had led them out of Egypt, through the desert and the shadows of death. It was forgotten by them, and when Jehovah brought them to the land of promise they had defiled the land. Priests, pastors and prophets had apostatized. Thus Jehovah states His case to plead with them and their children. Their folly and ingratitude were worse than that of heathen nations. Such was the failure of the favored nation. The failure of Christendom is even greater when we think of the greater manifestation of God's love in the gift of His Son, and the greater blessing and deliverance.

Jeremiah 2:12-18. The two evils are, forsaking Jehovah, the fountain of living waters, and the hewing for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water. Jehovah was the storehouse of the living waters, put at the disposal of His people without money and without price. But instead of confessing, "All my springs are in Thee," they had left Him, the source of life and comfort; and turned to broken cisterns of their own invention, as well as to the idols and worshipped them. It is so among the professing people of God in this dispensation; the two evils are present with us also. The result for Israel was enslavement. The young lions came (the Assyrian invasion) and made the land waste. Noph (Memphis) and Tahpanhes (Daphnae), that is, Egypt, did the same. It came as the fruit of having forsaken the fountain of living water.

2:19 (20) – 37. The divine impeachment and expostulation

Jeremiah 2:19-30. The impeachment begins with the solemn statement: "Know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken Jehovah Thy God, and that my fear is not in Thee, saith the Lord GOD of hosts." They had broken the covenant and played the harlot. The noble vine He had planted had degenerated. Their iniquity was marked before the Lord, and nothing that they did could remove the stain (Jeremiah 2:22). Yet they denied their guilt of going after idols. And when the Lord tells them, "withhold thy foot from being unshod," that is, running so much after strange gods, so that the feet become unshod, by wearing out the sandals, they boldly declared, "There is no hope; no, for I have loved strangers, and after them will I go." Their backs and their faces were turned from Jehovah. But when the time of trouble comes, they will say, "Arise, save us." But could or would the false gods they had made respond and save them? Some day a remnant of that nation will turn to the Lord and cry, "Arise, save us," and He will answer.

Jeremiah 2:31-37. Israel's conduct was incomprehensible. Once more it is the "Why" of Jehovah. What had He done that they should turn away from Him? Can a maid forget her ornaments or a bride her attire? Yet His people had forgotten Him, who had loved and adorned them, days without number. He will plead with them because they said, I have not sinned.

3:1-5. The results of Israel's infidelity

Jeremiah 3:1-5. Here is the first time the gracious invitation is given, "Return again to Me, saith the LORD." And how many times after, the Lord pleads in the riches of His mercy for His people to return unto Him and offers them forgiveness.



Fortified city in Judah, located 30 km southwest of Jerusalem. Large structure - one said to be monarch's palace; the other a royal storeroom — which have not previously been found in the Kingdom of Judah (10 BC), were uncovered by researchers of the Hebrew University and the Israel Antiquities Authority. The place of discovery is Khirbet Qeiyafa - a fortified city in Judah, located 30 km southwest of Jerusalem and dated to the time of King David and identified with the biblical city of Shaarayim.

Chapter 3

The Call to Repentance and judgment Announced (3:6-6:30)

Sermon 2. Devastation from the north

*1. The contrast between backslidden Israel and treacherous Judah (*Jeremiah 3:6-11*)*

*2. The call to return and the promised glory (*Jeremiah 3:12-18*)*

*3. The future true repentance predicted and anticipated (*Jeremiah 3:19-25*)*

3:1-5. The results of Israel's infidelity

3:6-25. Judah's apostasy greater than Israel's

Jeremiah 3:6-11. The message which begins with the sixth verse was given to Jeremiah during the reign of Josiah. There is then, first of all, a contrast between Israel (the ten tribes) and her sister Judah. (Compare with Ezekiel 23:1-49.) The house of Israel, the northern kingdom was judged first by the Lord. She played the harlot; after she had done so, the Lord said, "Turn thou to Me." She refused, and her treacherous sister the house of Judah saw it. And when the Lord dealt with the house of Israel in judgment and they were carried away, Judah did not fear but played the harlot. The tenth verse proves conclusively that the reformation under Josiah was not a true spiritual revival: "And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah hath not returned unto Me with her whole heart, but feignedly, saith the LORD."

Jeremiah 3:12-18. Here is a message to be proclaimed toward the north, calling on backsliding Israel to return. He promises mercy to them. One hundred years before, the house of Israel had gone northward as captives. The Lord knew where they dwelt and sent them this message of mercy. He knows today where the house of Israel is, the ten tribes, and at some future time the gracious offer given here will be consummated in their return. These verses are prophetic. They speak of the time when the chosen people will return. Then Jerusalem will be called "the throne of the LORD." Israel will be converted. All the nations will be gathered unto the Name of Jehovah; the house of Judah with the house of Israel will be reunited. That will be when the King our ever blessed Lord comes back.

Jeremiah 3:19-25. What the future true repentance of the people will be is here predicted and anticipated. There will be weeping and supplications. They will

acknowledge that true salvation is in the Lord. They will confess their sins and their disobedience.

Chapter 4

*1. True repentance and what it means (*Jeremiah 4:1-4*)*

*2. The alarm sounded: judgment comes (*Jeremiah 4:5-13*)*

*3. The doom of the rebellious people (*Jeremiah 4:14-22*)*

*4. The desolation of Israel's land through judgment (*Jeremiah 4:23-31*)*

4:1-31. The foe from the north

Jeremiah 4:1-4. A return must be a return unto Him, Jehovah; anything less is insufficient. Their abominations must be judged and put away. Every return of backsliders must be in the same way--a true return to the Lord with confession of sin, self-judgment, and abandonment of evil. The circumcision of the heart means regeneration. (See Jeremiah 31:31-34, and Ezekiel 36:26.)

Jeremiah 4:5-13. This is the first definite announcement of the coming judgment from the north, which Jeremiah had seen in the vision of the boiling pot toward the north (chapter 1). The lion who comes, the destroyer of the Gentiles, who makes the land desolate, is Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon. It is a very vivid description of the approaching judgment. Jeremiah 4:10 means not that Jeremiah is reproaching the Lord for having deceived the people. Jeremiah did not preach peace, but the false prophets did. They came and spoke in the name of Jehovah, that there should be peace; and Jehovah permitted as a judgment these prophets, and the message of these prophets. And thus they were deceived.

Jeremiah 4:14-22. The doom of Jerusalem and Judah is sealed; there can be no escape. Their ways and their doings brought all upon them. And when Jeremiah hears it from the lips of the Lord, he breaks out in a lament: "My bowels, My bowels! I am pained at my very heart. My heart maketh a noise in me; I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war."

Jeremiah 4:23-31. Then the prophet has a vision of what will happen to the land of Israel, when the judgment threatened above has passed over it. The unscriptural invention and wicked teachings of Seventh Day Adventism applies this passage to the whole earth and teaches that when the Lord comes the whole

earth will be laid waste. Like Isaiah 24:1-23, only Israel's land is in view. It must be not overlooked that the Lord said: "The whole land shall be desolate; yet will I not make a full end." This is Israel's hope.

Chapter 5

*1. The apostate conditions of Jerusalem (*Jeremiah 5:1-9*)*

*2. The impending judgment (*Jeremiah 5:10-18*)*

*3. Sowing and reaping (*Jeremiah 5:19-29*)*

*4. The horrible thing (*Jeremiah 5:30-31*)*

5:1-31. Judgment and impending disaster

Jeremiah 5:1-9. So degenerate had the inhabitants of Jerusalem become that the Lord promised if but one man could be found in the city who executed judgment and sought the truth, He would pardon Jerusalem. It was a general apostasy. A similar apostasy is predicted for the end of our age. "Nevertheless when the Son of Man cometh shall He find the faith on the earth?" "They were foolish, saith the Lord; they broke the yoke and burst the bonds; they have refused to return. They were as fed horses in the morning; every one neighed after his neighbor's wife. Shall I not visit these things, saith the Lord; and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?"

Jeremiah 5:10-18. The judgment messages had not been believed by the people (Jeremiah 5:12). What the invader from the north will do to Israel is described in Jeremiah 5:15-18. Again the promise is given, "I will not make a full end with you." The Lord keeps in the midst of His people a remnant.

Jeremiah 5:19-29. Their sowing was bringing a harvest. They asked, "Wherefore doeth the LORD our God all these things unto us?" He answers them that they had sown their evil seed in forsaking the Lord and serving strange gods; the harvest would be serving strangers in a strange land. The good things promised had been turned away by their sins and iniquities. The question of Jeremiah 5:9 is repeated in Jeremiah 5:29. And what was true of that generation, is true of this present age also. The seed which is being sown is Bible rejection; the rejection of the gospel of Christ, the seed of apostasy, will bring a harvest of judgment as it did with Israel.

(Jeremiah 1:30-31). False prophets, false priests and the people were satisfied with it. How is it going to be in the end? Both prophets and priests were in

league against the prophet of God. They misled the people; they were a curse instead of a blessing. It is not unlike the religious conditions in Christendom today.

Chapter 6

*1. The call to the children of Benjamin (*Jeremiah 6:1-8*)*

*2. Corruption and the deserved judgment (*Jeremiah 6:9-26*)*

*3. The prophet addressed (*Jeremiah 6:27-30*)*

6:1-30. Continued warning

Jeremiah 6:1-8. The children of Benjamin are exhorted to flee for safety on account of the evil from the north. There were probably among the Benjamites God-fearing men. Those who heeded the call fled and escaped. It is a warning message which follows: "Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, let my soul depart from thee; lest I make thee desolate, a land not inhabited." But they heeded it not.

Jeremiah 6:9-26. They did not hear because they had uncircumcised ears, neither had they delight in the Word of the Lord. How true this is today of the great mass of professing Christians! The Lord will now no longer restrain His fury; He will pour it out upon them. Covetousness, the love of money, as it is in our day, was the controlling passion. Prophet and priest dealt falsely; their one message, like the one message of the prophet and priest today, was peace, peace, when there was no peace. Then once more the judgment from the north is announced (Jeremiah 6:18-26) .

Jeremiah 6:27-30. In the final paragraph of this chapter the Lord speaks intimately to the prophet. He is encouraged and strengthened. He is set as a tower and as a fortress. What a position of honor! May we consider it as we are as His believing people surrounded by the flood of apostasy; that we, too, are called to be a tower and fortress.

Chapter 7

7-10. Sermon 3 – Threat of exile

This temple message, like the two preceding sermons, was a stern rebuke, warning and exhortation, but centred in the religious conditions in Judah.

The Prophet's Temple Address (7-9)

*1. Amend your ways and your doings (*Jeremiah 7:1-15*)*

*2. No prayer-answer to be expected (*Jeremiah 7:16-20*)*

*3. Sacrifices rejected; Obedience demanded (*Jeremiah 7:21-28*)*

*4. Jerusalem's rejection (*Jeremiah 7:29-34*)*

7:1-34. Rebuke of apostate religionism

Jeremiah 7:1-15. We call this next address of the prophet "the temple address," because he was commanded to stand in the gate of the LORD's house. There he stood, a solitary figure, and said: "Hear the Word of the LORD, all ye of Judah, that enter in at these gates to worship Jehovah." Their worship was but external. They trusted in the temple of the Lord, as if with the house itself some kind of a blessing was connected and the house would shield them from disaster. Micah gives the same delusion of the apostate people: "Yet will they lean upon the LORD, and say, is not the LORD among us? no evil can come upon us" Micah 3:11. Such a false trust in ordinances and outward worship is only too evident in Christendom also. The masses of unsaved people with their religious observances think it is a protection and insures the Lord's help and blessing. They trusted in lying words. They were thieves, murderers, adulterers, perjurers and idolators, and they thought if they go to the house of the LORD they would be delivered from these abominations. The Lord calls upon them to amend their ways and their doings, to work a better righteousness. They had made His house a den of robbers. This verse (Jeremiah 7:11) was quoted by our Lord in Matthew 21:13. He tells them of the fate of Shiloh when it was overthrown on account of the wickedness of Israel; such would be the fate of the temple Psalms 78:60. They would be cast out as the whole seed of Ephraim had been cast out.

Jeremiah 7:16-20. The Lord told the prophet that no prayer of intercession would be answered. "I will not hear thee." What a word this is, coming from Him, who had told Israel to cry unto Him and He would answer. They had provoked Him by making cakes to the queen of heaven. They had fallen in with

the worship of a female idol, so prevalent among the idolatrous nations which surrounded them, like the Phoenicians, the Assyrians, the Egyptians and the Babylonians. The Babylonian Venus, Ishtar, was called by them the queen of heaven. The Assyrian called her Beltis, the female form of Baal; they placed in the sculpture a star over her head and called her "the mistress of the heavens." The Phoenicians worshipped this "queen of heaven" under the name of Ashtoreth or Astarte. This wicked worship, with which all kinds of immoral ceremonies were connected, had been adopted by the Jews. The women made cakes to present to this goddess. Jewish tradition tells us that the image of the idol was stamped on each cake. This worship of "the queen of heaven" is perpetuated in the mystical Babylon, Rome, the great whore and mother of harlots Revelation 17:1-18. Mary is called by Romanists "the queen of heaven" and "mistress of the heavens." It can be proven that Mariolatry is but the continuation of the Babylonish worship of the goddess they called "queen of heaven." If the Lord was provoked to anger because the women of Israel brought cakes to this queen of heaven, how much more is He provoked to anger with the idolatries of papal Rome?

Jeremiah 7:21-28. He brands their sacrifices as worthless. He gave no command concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices in the day He brought them out of Egypt. Destructive critics have built upon this verse (22) a puerile argument to prove that the law of sacrifices was not given by Moses, but introduced many centuries later. When the Lord first led them out of Egypt, He gave them no laws as to sacrifices, but asked obedience. They harkened not; nor did they in Jeremiah's day. It is a nation that obeyeth not the voice of the Lord, nor receiveth correction.

Jeremiah 7:29-34. The hair was cut off as a sign of mourning Job 1:20. Jerusalem is to lament in the high places. They have defiled His house. On the heights of Tophet, in the valley of the son of Hinnom, they had burned their children as a sacrifice to Molech 2 Kings 23:10. The days were now to come when the same place should become the place of slaughter. The carcasses of the people should then be meat for the beasts of the earth; they should lie there unburied. Such was to be Jerusalem's rejection and judgment.

Chapter 8

*1. The horrors of the invasion (*Jeremiah 8:1-3*)*

*2. Hardened hearts and retribution (*Jeremiah 8:4-12*)*

*3. Utter destruction threatened (*Jeremiah 8:13-17*)*

*4. The prophet’s lamentation (*Jeremiah 8:18-22*)*

8:1-22. Further warnings of judgment

Jeremiah 8:1-3. These verses must not be detached from the preceding chapter. The division of chapters is often unfortunate in this book. The invaders from the north would even have digged out the bones of the dead. Kings, priests, prophets and people who had worshipped the sun, the moon and the stars should be exposed and spread out before the sun and moon, remain unburied and become dung. We doubt not that all this was literally done during the Chaldean invasion.

Jeremiah 8:4-12. They did not repent of their wickedness. Theirs was a perpetual backsliding. The stork knows his appointed time; the turtle, the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming, but they had hardened their hearts in such a manner that they knew not the judgment of the Lord. Hence the retribution (Jeremiah 8:9-12) .

Jeremiah 8:13-17. The thirteenth verse shows the desolation which will fall upon the land when the Lord arises. The words of Jeremiah 8:14-16 were spoken by the prophet and not by the impenitent people as some take it. The 16th verse (Jeremiah 8:16) is extremely vivid.

Jeremiah 8:18-22. His heart was faint in him. He is overwhelmed with sorrow. The harvest was passed, the summer gone and they were not saved. It is a mournful outburst.

Chapter 9

*1. The prophet’s complaint and Jehovah’s answer (*Jeremiah 9:1-9*)*

*2. The cause of desolation and destruction (*Jeremiah 9:10-16*)*

*3. The call for the mourning and wailing women (*Jeremiah 9:17-22*)*

*4. Glorying in the Lord in view of judgment (*Jeremiah 9:23-26*)*

9:1-26. Jeremiah weeps over sinners

Jeremiah 9:1-9. Here again is a deplorable break. The opening verses of this chapter belong to the preceding one. The prophet still speaks. He is overwhelmed with sorrow; his eyes are fountains of tears. He weeps day and night over the slain. He wishes himself away in some wilderness, to be alone and separated from the adulterous generation. Then follows a description of the

moral corruption of the people. The Lord answered him and once more asks the question: “Shall not I visit them for these things? saith the LORD shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?” (See Jeremiah 5:9; Jeremiah 5:29.)

Jeremiah 9:10-16. Jerusalem will be heaps, ruins and a den of dragons. The cities of Judah will be desolate. But why is it like this? Because they forsook His law, obeyed not His voice, and practiced idolatries. Therefore their portion would be wormwood and gall. They would be scattered among the nations.

Jeremiah 9:17-22. The time of wailing and mourning is at hand. “For death is come up into our windows, and is entered into our palaces, to cut off the children from without and the young men from the street.” Pestilence was to sweep over them and enter into their habitations. Hence the call to the professional wailers to sing the mournful dirges of death. These wailing women are also called “wise women,” for they dabbled in magical, occult things, in familiar spirits and in soothsaying.

Jeremiah 9:23-26. The days were coming when judgment would strike Jews and Gentiles, for the uncircumcised Gentiles and for Israel, uncircumcised in heart. In view of these days of judgment the prophet exhorts to stop their boasts in wisdom, in might and in riches, for all availeth nothing. “But let him that glorieth glory in Me, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the LORD which exercise loving-kindness, judgment and righteousness, in the earth, for in these things I delight, saith the LORD.” May we also glory in Him and not in the things of the dust, the temporal, the passing things, which are but for a moment! Let us remember “the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.”



Above page 55: Site of the Chalcolithic period temple Amegiddo

Archaeological light

View looking south down into the German Trench at a temple, variously dated to the late Chalcolithic, early Early Bronze Age - say ca. 3000 B.C.

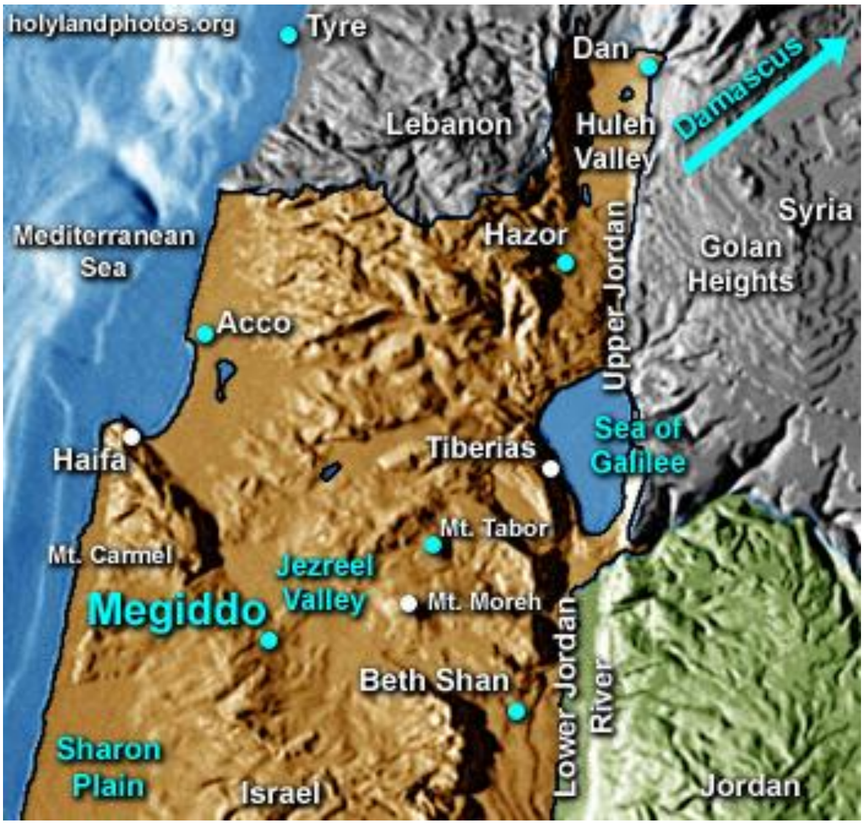
The temple is visible on the left side of the photo. It is rectangular in shape with the door on the long, or "broad wall." In the centre of the temple there is a line of 4 rectangular stones on which columns stood that supported the roof of this structure. This "broad house" design was used for both houses and temples at Arad in the southern part of Israel.



View through the trench that the Germans dug on the eastern side of Megiddo - looking toward Mt. Moreh 9.5 mi. [15 km.] in the distance. At the bottom level of the trench a number of Early Bronze Age cultic structures, including four temples and a large circular altar, were found. In the center of the photo the large Early Bronze Age altar is visible in the shadow. In the distance (right of centre) is Mount Gilboa.

Megiddo

The mount of Megiddo is situated in northern Israel on southwestern edge of the Jezreel Valley. It controls a pass that leads through Mt. Carmel and thus it was of considerable strategic importance. Four different excavations of Megiddo have been mounted since 1903 up through the present. It is 15 acres [6 ha.] in size. Over 20 strata (levels of civilization) have been found at the site.



Megiddo is a large mound (15 a. [6 ha.]) that rises about 160 ft. [50 m.] above the surrounding plain. It was excavated throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century. It contains at least 20 distinct archaeological strata.

Megiddo was a strategically important city, for the main International Highway that led from Egypt to Mesopotamia passed by it. For example, one heading north from Egypt would pass through the Sharon Plain, and then continue though the "Megiddo Pass" on Mt. Carmel to Megiddo. From Megiddo, one could head north northwest to Acco (on the Mediterranean Coast), or east southeast to Beth Shan (and from there into Transjordan), or head north northeast, around Mt. Tabor, and then continue north to Hazor, Dan, and eventually Damascus. All of these routes were extremely important, and Megiddo was at the "hub" of them.

Megiddo is mentioned twelve times in the biblical text. The Canaanites controlled Megiddo until David conquered it and Solomon fortified it. Megiddo served as an important administrative center for the Israelite kings from the days of Solomon until it was conquered by the Assyrians (ca. 733 B.C.).

Chapter 10

The Vanity of Idols

*1. Be not dismayed at the signs of heaven (*Jeremiah 10:1-5*)*

*2. The contrast: The vanity of idols and the Lord, the King of Nations (*Jeremiah 10:6-18*)*

*3. The affliction of the prophet and his prayer (*Jeremiah 10:19-25*)*

10:1-25. The Lord and idolatry

Jeremiah 10:1-5. The heathen paid attention to the signs of heaven, such as eclipses, comets, meteoric showers, etc. They were dismayed at these things. All they did, their customs and observances in connection with idol worship, was nothing but vanity.

Jeremiah 10:6-18. Idols are nothing, but the Lord God of Israel is all. He is the King of Nations, who rules over all. He is the true God, the living God, the everlasting King. At His wrath the earth trembles and the nations shall not be able to abide His indignation. He made the earth by His power; He established the world by wisdom; He stretched out the heavens by His discretion. But what is man? Brutish in his knowledge.

Jeremiah 10:19-25. Here we see how Jeremiah identified himself with the afflictions and sorrows of Jerusalem. In his prayer he pleads that the judgment might be only for correction and not for a complete and perpetual consummation. "O LORD correct me, but with judgment; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing." He calls for judgment upon the nations. Well may we see in pleading Jeremiah, the weeping prophet, who is afflicted in Jerusalem's affliction, who identified himself with his people, a type and picture of Him who is greater than Jeremiah.

Chapter 11

The Broken Covenant and the Plot Against Jeremiah – Sermon 4

*1. The broken covenant (*Jeremiah 11:1-17*)*

*2. The plot revealed and Jehovah's answer (*Jeremiah 11:18-23*)*

11:1-12:17. The broken covenant

Jeremiah 11:1-17. Jehovah had made a covenant with His people. He tells the prophet about it and the responsibility which was connected with that covenant. They were to obey His voice. Then should they be His people and He their God. And of this covenant it was written, "Cursed be the man that obeyeth not the words of this covenant." The prophet answered the Lord: "So be it LORD" (Amen). Then he is commanded to proclaim this covenant and tell the people that they had broken the covenant. They had followed the evil example of their fathers. They had burned incense to the idol gods. Therefore the prophet again is told not to pray for this adulterous generation, "for I will not hear them in the time they cry unto Me in their trouble." Yet the Lord in spite of it all still calls them "My Beloved," though they had broken the covenant and worked lewdness. Jeremiah 11:16 is used by the Spirit of God in Romans 11:1-36, the chapter which begins with the assurance that God has not cast away His people. The branches of the green olive tree are broken. Yet there is hope; they are still beloved for the Father's sake.

Jeremiah 11:18-23. The Lord revealed unto him their doings. He was ignorant of it, like a lamb or an ox brought to the slaughter. They wanted to cut him off from the land of the living. He calls for vengeance upon them, which is in full keeping with the law dispensation and God's righteous government.

Righteousness characterizes the saint as well as love, and has its place where there are adversaries to that love and to the blessing of the loved people. It is the Spirit of prophecy, not the gospel, no doubt because prophecy is connected with the government of God, not with His present dealings in sovereign grace. Hence in the Revelation vengeance is called for by the saint. (Synopsis of the Bible.)

The men of Anathoth had intimidated him by saying, "Prophesy not in the name of the LORD, that thou die not by our hand." The Lord answers him that their young men should die by the sword, and their sons and daughters by famine. No remnant of them should be left.

Chapter 12

The Prophet's Prayer and the House Forsaken, Yet Compassion

*1. The prophet's prayer (*Jeremiah 12:1-6*)*

*2. The house forsaken, yet compassion (*Jeremiah 12:7-17*)*

Jeremiah 12:1-6. In his outburst of grief and in great mental perplexity Jeremiah states the old question, why does the righteous man suffer, why does the wicked prosper? And then the prayer for His intervention. Such will be again the case with the godly remnant in the end of this present age. They will suffer and be persecuted as godly Jeremiah was and pray as Jeremiah prayed: “Pull them out like sheep for the slaughter, and prepare them for the day of slaughter.” The imprecatory psalms are of the same prophetic meaning. Jehovah’s answer tells him that greater trials were in store for him (Jeremiah 12:5-6) .

Jeremiah 12:7-17. The house is to be forsaken. The dearly beloved is to be given into the hands of the enemies. The sword of the Lord would now devour them. But there is the warning to the nations who touch His inheritance. He will deal with them in judgment as He dealt with Judah. Then we find the promise, “I will return and have compassion on them.” This is still future. The compassion for Israel comes in the day of His return.

Chapter 13

Signs, Warnings, and Exhortations

*1. The linen girdle and the filled bottles (*Jeremiah 13:1-14*)*

*2. Hear and give glory (*Jeremiah 13:15-21*)*

*3. The justice of the judgment (*Jeremiah 13:22-27*)*

13: 1-27. The parable of the linen belt

Jeremiah 13:1-14. The prophet enacts a sign, that of the linen girdle. After he had put on the girdle, he was told to hide it in a hole of the rock of the Euphrates. After many days, he was commanded to dig for the girdle. It was found marred and profitable for nothing. Was this only a vision, or did the prophet actually make the long journey to the Euphrates and then repeat it after many days? The latter is quite improbable, nor can the command be called a vision. The question is what river is meant, the river Euphrates or another river by a similar name? The Hebrew word for Euphrates is “Perath,” and the word river is generally added to this word. In the text here it is missing. Now, three miles north of Anathoth there was a small river by the name of “Parah” Joshua 18:23. It probably means this place to which the prophet was commanded to go. Both words in the Hebrew spring from the same root.

The meaning of this symbolical action is explained. A girdle belonged to the priest. Israel was called to be the priestly nation. As a girdle cleaveth to the loins

of a man, so the Lord had chosen Israel to cleave unto Him, “that they might be unto Me for a people,” and for a name and for a glory. And as the girdle had become marred and profitable for nothing, so even would their pride, that in which they gloried as the chosen people, be marred.

The bottles filled with wine, dashed one against the other, are the symbol of their sin intoxication and their destruction.

Jeremiah 13:15-21. How patient and merciful is Jehovah! He interrupts His judgment message by calling on the people, whom He still loves, to give ear and to give glory to Jehovah. It is the utterance of the prophet, the outpouring of His love towards His people. The prophet addresses the king and the queen: “Humble yourselves.” And then his heart seems to break in anticipation of their obstinacy. “But if ye will not hear, my soul shall weep in secret places on account of your pride, and mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because the LORD’s flock is carried away captive.”

Jeremiah 13:22-27. Wherefore? they asked. And He answers, “For the greatness of thine iniquity ... because thou hast forgotten Me and trusted in falsehood.” Woe unto thee, Jerusalem! wilt thou not be made clean? When shall it be? But could they do it themselves? “Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to evil.” The new heart is needed Ezekiel 36:1-38; the new birth of which the Lord spoke to the teacher in Israel.

II. The Prophet’s ministry before the fall of Jerusalem, the prophecies of judgment and restoration, the personal history of Jeremiah, his faithfulness and his suffering.

14-17. Sermon 5 – The drought; sign of the unmarried prophet

Chapter 14

The Great Drought, the Sword, the Famine, and the Pestilence

*1. The description of the drought (*Jeremiah 14:1-6*)*

*2. The prophet’s priestly intercession (*Jeremiah 14:7-9*)*

*3. The answer (*Jeremiah 14:10-18*)*

*4. The renewed prayer (*Jeremiah 14:19-22*)*

14:1-22. Drought and the nation’s doom

Jeremiah 14:1-6. The vivid description of the great drought is given in these verses. The little ones sent forth for water returned empty handed. It is the picture of distress.

Jeremiah 14:7-9. And now the prophet’s voice as intercessor is heard. Like Daniel (chapter 9), in his great prayer Jeremiah acknowledges the nation’s sin as his own. But he trusts in the Lord and knows that He is “the hope of Israel,” the Saviour. Blessed statements of faith which came from His lips: “Thou, O LORD, art in the midst of us--we are called by Thy Name--leave us not” (Jeremiah 14:9) ! The Saviour and hope of Israel has surely not given up His people, though judgment had to do its work.

Jeremiah 14:10-18. They wandered away from Him, saith the Lord in answering Jeremiah. Their iniquities will be remembered and their sins visited. This is the demand of a righteous God. He is not going to hear their cry; the sword of the famine and the pestilence will consume them. Jeremiah tells the Lord about the message of the false prophets. They had promised peace, just as the false teachers in Christendom do today. But they prophesied lies in His name; He had not sent them, nor commanded them nor had He spoken to them.

Jeremiah 14:19-22. What soul stirring petitions these are. It is not the impenitent nation which speaks, but the prophet is pleading in the place of the people and for them.

Chapter 15

The Prophet’s Deep Soul-Exercise

*1. The answer (*Jeremiah 15:1-9*)*

*2. The prophet’s grief and sorrow and Jehovah’s answer (*Jeremiah 15:10-21*)*

15:1-21. The Lord’s answer to Jeremiah

Jeremiah 15:1-9. The preceding prayer is now answered and the Lord tells Jeremiah that if Moses and Samuel, these two great men of intercessory prayer, were pleading, judgment would not be averted. What is in store for those who are appointed to death, for the sword, for the famine, for captivity, will be accomplished. There is no escape. They will be removed among all kingdoms on account of Manasseh’s great sin 2 Kings 21:11-26. The terrors of judgment are

described in Jeremiah 15:7-9. Their children will be taken; widows increase; the mother of seven children faints, because they are all taken from her.

Jeremiah 15:10-21. Jeremiah is overwhelmed. He pronounces a "woe" upon himself and declares that his mother has given birth to one who is a man of strife, of contention to the whole land. He has faithfully discharged his duty; he loved his people and they hated him beyond measure. Every one cursed him, as if he were a wicked man. What anguish of soul this implies! But then the Lord was near to cheer and comfort him, as He is near to us when we are in sorrow and all is dark and we are in despair. It would be well with him and with those, who, like Jeremiah, trust the Lord. But the remnant, too, would suffer with the nation's portion (Jeremiah 15:13-14). This brings out another prayer from Jeremiah's heart. He pleads for revenge upon his adversaries, and then prays, "Take me not away in Thy longsuffering, know that for Thy sake I have suffered rebuke." But while he prayed he also used the Word of God. "Thy words were found, and I did eat them." He fed on the bread of life. The word was unto him the joy and rejoicing of his heart. He knew from the Word that he was called by His Name. And we also can turn to the Word and feed on it. But how few can say, "Thy Word is the joy and rejoicing of my heart." That Word on which Jeremiah fed, which filled his sorrowful heart, led him to separation. It will lead us also to separation in the evil day of departure from God and the threatening judgment. He sat alone; He refused to have anything to do with the assembly of mockers, those who denied His Word and His Name, who listened to the false prophets with their false message. Jeremiah 15:18 must be interpreted in the sense that Jeremiah speaks as representing the godly remnant of Israel. There was such a remnant then in the midst of the wicked mass, there will be such a remnant again in the future, during the great tribulation, or, as Jeremiah calls that time, "The time of Jacob's trouble." They suffer in the trials and judgments; they are fearful, yet trusting. Jeremiah is representative of this remnant. The answer the Lord gives in Jeremiah 15:19-21 must be explained in the same light. Jeremiah 15:21 will find its final fulfilment of the future remnant when the Lord returns and redeems them from the hand of the wicked and the hand of the terrible, the two beasts of Revelation 13:1-18.

Chapter 16

The Coming Calamities: Restoration Promised, Ruin Imminent on Account of Judah's Sin and Concerning the Sabbath (16-17)

*1. The coming calamities (*Jeremiah 16:1-13*)*

*2. The coming days of restoration and blessing (*Jeremiah 16:14-21*)*

16:1-21. The approaching disaster, the wages of sin

Jeremiah 16:1-13. In view of the coming calamities Jeremiah is bidden to remain unmarried and not to raise a family. The verses which describe the coming calamities need no further annotations.

Jeremiah 16:14-21. The great dispersion was announced by the Lord in the preceding verse: "Therefore will I cast you out of this land, into a land that ye know not, neither ye nor your fathers; and there ye shall serve other gods day and night; where I will not show you favour." But is this to last forever? Is this dispersion permanent? Will they always be homeless wanderers? The next verse gives the answer: "I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers." They will be brought back from the land of the north and from all lands where they had been driven. It will be a greater deliverance than the deliverance out of Egypt. Critics have found fault with these verses: "They are out of place here, but whether inserted by accident, or whether to modify the painful impression of the prophecy of judgment in which they are inserted, we cannot say" (Prof. A.S. Peake). They are not out of place, nor inserted by some unknown hand. The Lord declares His gracious purposes which will yet be accomplished. That these verses were not fulfilled in the return of the small remnant from Babylon is obvious. They will be fulfilled in the future, when the house of Israel and the house of Judah will be re-established in the land. Then the so-called "lost tribes" will be found again by Him for whom they were never lost, "For Mine eyes are upon all their ways, they are not hid from My face neither is their iniquity hid from Mine eyes." He will send fishers and hunters to bring them forth. It is the same of which our Lord speaks in Matthew 24:31. The elect of whom the Lord speaks are not a spiritual Israel, but the elect nation Israel. Then the voice of the prophet is heard in Jeremiah 16:19 with a blessed prophetic declaration: "The Gentiles shall come unto Thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity and things wherein there is no profit." It denotes the conversion of the world, which--in prophecy never precedes the restoration of Israel, but always follows that great coming event. (See Romans 11:12; Romans 11:15; Acts 15:14-41) .

Chapter 17

*1. Judah's sin (*Jeremiah 17:1-4*)*

*2. The curse and the blessing (*Jeremiah 17:5-11*)*

*3. The worship of Jeremiah (*Jeremiah 17:12-18*)*

*4. Concerning the Sabbath (*Jeremiah 17:19-27*)*

17:1-27. Judah's terrible sin

Jeremiah 17:1-4. The sin of Judah was idolatry, engraven with a pen of iron, the point of a diamond, upon their heart (from whence it proceeded) and upon the horns of their altars. They had destroyed but a few years before the asherim (translated groves, a kind of sacred post), and now their children turned back to the abominable heathen cults. His anger and judgment must now be their portion.

Jeremiah 17:5-11. A curse is pronounced upon him who trusteth in man, who departeth from the Lord. For such a one there is no hope; he shall not see good; he must be an outcast, like the heath in the desert. And such is the natural condition of man, his heart is departed from the Lord, he trusteth in himself, making flesh his arm to defend and to uphold. But blessing is for the man who trusteth in the Lord, whose hope the Lord is. Jeremiah 17:8 contains the same truth as Psalms 1:3. It is a description of the God-fearing in Israel, who knew the Lord, trusted and hoped in Him. He had called them to this place of blessing; He had encouraged them to trust in Him; He had manifested His glory and His power in their midst. But they turned away from Him, they leaned not on Him, but on the arm of flesh, on Egypt. The heart is the source of it, deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. The question, "Who can know it?" is answered, "I the LORD search the heart." He has sounded the depths of it and in His omniscience knew the shameful history of Israel, and all their backsliding. So He knew and knows what we are, yet in sovereign love and grace He has loved us and bears with His own.

Jeremiah 17:12-18. The worship of the prophet stands here also for the worship and soul exercise of the godly remnant of the Lord's people. The sanctuary of the godly is the glorious high throne, that throne which we know as the throne of grace. In Jeremiah 17:14 there is expressed by the prophet in behalf of the God-fearing the need of His salvation. They mocked the prophet, "Where is the Word of the LORD? Let it come." So they will hate the remnant of the future Isaiah 66:5. And we know the prediction in Peter's second Epistle 2 Peter 3:1-18. Jeremiah 17:18 corresponds to the imprecatory psalms. What Jeremiah prays, was fulfilled upon that evil generation; and some day the imprecatory psalms will be fulfilled when the Lord deals again in judgment with the nation.

Jeremiah 17:19-27. Kuenen and other critics deny the Jeremianic authorship of this passage. It is not out of keeping with the message of the prophet. The Sabbath of which he is commanded to speak is the standard of Israel's spiritual condition, for it is the weekly reminder of Israel's covenant relation with Jehovah. If they neglected the divine command, as they always did in their

departure from the Lord, it was the outward evidence that they had broken the covenant. If they really returned to the Lord they would show it by keeping the solemn Sabbaths and the Lord would bless them. But they obeyed not. This passage as well as others is used by the pernicious Seventh Day Adventistic cult, which denies grace and turns back to the law. But the Sabbath has nothing to do with the Church, nor has the Church anything to do with the Sabbath. The Sabbath is an institution of the law in connection with Israel. The great documents addressed to the church, the Epistles, never mention the Sabbath once, nor is there anywhere in the Epistles and exhortation to keep the Sabbath.



Clay pots in the marketplace

18-20. Sermon 6 – Sign of the potter's house

Chapter 18

The Potter and the Clay

*1. In the potter's house and the message (*Jeremiah 18:1-17*)*

*2. The plot against the prophet and his prayer (*Jeremiah 18:18-23*)*

18:1-23. The prophet's visit to the potter

Jeremiah 18:1-17. He was commanded to go to the house of a potter and watch his work. The vessel Jeremiah sees fashioned out of clay is marred; it did not turn out well. Then the clay was taken up again and made in another vessel as it seemed good to the potter to make it. Then came the message: "O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in my hand, O house of Israel." If the creature of the dust can do as he pleases with the clay, how much more the Sovereign God. The Holy Spirit evidently uses this in Romans 9:20-32.

If a nation is threatened with destruction and that nation turns to the Lord, He will repent of the evil pronounced upon them. This is fully illustrated in the case of Jonah's prediction, God-given as it was, of Nineveh's overthrow. Nineveh repented and the judgment was not executed upon that generation. But if the Lord has promised a nation good and that nation does evil in His sight, He will repent of the good He had promised unto them. Thus the potter's action is used to convey a great lesson, the lesson of God's sovereignty, to do as He pleaseth, yet always in perfect righteousness. If Israel had owned then the sin and guilt and turned to the Lord, He would have acted in sovereign grace towards them. Their answer was: "There is no hope; but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imaginations of his evil heart." What depravity and wicked boldness these words reveal! They refused to believe the message of the Lord. They pushed aside the hand which would snatch them out of the fire. They acknowledged the evil heart and deliberately declared to continue in wicked defiance of Jehovah. And is it any better in professing Christendom today? The answer of the Lord, an answer of kindness and long-suffering follows.

Jeremiah 18:18-23. They arose in rebellion against the messenger of Jehovah. They hated him. They would smite him with the tongue, malign him, bring false accusations against him. But the man of God does not take up their contentions. Like Hezekiah when the enemy reviled him, Jeremiah turned to the Lord. He tells the Lord all about it. Then he prays for judgment to fall upon them. Here once more we must look upon these words prophetically. Such expressions as used by the prophet here will, during the great tribulation, come from the lips of the remnant of Israel, who suffer from their enemies and who righteously call for heaven's vengeance, which will fall upon these enemies when Jehovah, our Lord, is manifested in glory.



A potter at his wheel

Chapter 19

The Broken Bottle

*1. The broken bottle and the message (*Jeremiah 19:1-13*)*

*2. The fate announced in the court of the Lord's house (*Jeremiah 19:14-15*)*

19:1-15. The broken clay jar was another sign that the Lord would smash the idolatry-ridden people.

Jeremiah 19:1-13. He was to get a potter's earthen bottle accompanied by elders and priests, and go to the valley of the son of Hinnom. There he should proclaim the words Jehovah would breathe into him. The message is another judgment message and needs no further comment. In Tophet, the valley of Hinnom, they had worked their abominations, burnt their sons with fire. Now it should become the valley of slaughter, so that their carcasses should be eaten by the fowls and wild beasts. He would cause them to eat the flesh of their loved ones. It was fulfilled during the siege of Jerusalem Lamentations 4:10. Then he broke the bottle as a sign that thus the people and the city should be broken.

Jeremiah 19:14-15. When the prophet returned from the valley of Hinnom he took his place in the court of the LORD's house and declared the fate of the city.

Chapter 20

Pashur.-Jeremiah's Perplexity and Complaint

*1. Pashur and Jeremiah (*Jeremiah 20:1-6*)*

*2. Jeremiah's great perplexity and complaint (*Jeremiah 20:7-18*)*

20:1-18. Public punishment of Jeremiah

Jeremiah 20:1-6. A great scene now follows the message in connection with the broken bottle. The great Pashur, the chief governor in the house of the LORD had heard of the message. He smites Jeremiah and puts him in the stocks, which must have been some form of cruel torture by which the victim was rendered helpless, besides being exposed to the vulgarity of the people who passed by and would taunt him. In this position Jeremiah remained all night before the high gate of Benjamin. In the morning he was released. He then speaks as only an inspired prophet can speak. His name Pashur (which means "most noble") should now be "Magor-missabib," which means "terror on every side." The awful fate of Pashur and his own is predicted. He is dumb, perhaps even then terror-stricken, as he looks into the flashing eyes of the man of God and listens to the fiery words.

Jeremiah 20:7-18. What follows now is a most passionate outburst, revealing an unspeakable emotion of the soul, as perhaps nowhere else in the prophetic Scriptures. Even critics acknowledge this as "one of the most powerful and impressive passages in the whole of the prophetic literature, a passage which takes us, as no other, not only into the depths of the prophet's soul, but into the secrets of his prophetic consciousness." "LORD," he cries, "Thou has deceived me, and I was deceived." The Revised Version has translated it, "Thou has persuaded m," but that is not correct. He acknowledges himself deceived, or enticed. He is troubled with doubt. He speaks of his great trials. He is a laughing stock--he is a reproach and a derision all the day. He tried to stop mentioning Him and not to speak any more in His name; but he tried to turn back upon his commission. But then the fire burned within him; his conscience became as a burning fire. He had heard defaming, his best friends had said "We will denounce him." They thought of taking revenge on him.

But suddenly faith is victorious. He must have remembered the words of the Lord in connection with his commission, "For I am with thee saith the LORD, to

deliver thee" (chapter 1). And so he cries out, "The LORD is with me." He prays to see His vengeance on his enemies, for unto Him he had revealed His cause. And then the singing! "Sing unto the LORD, praise ye the LORD for He has delivered the soul of the needy from the hand of the evil-doers." Such is the experience of the godly remnant in fears an doubts, troubled on all sides, fleeing to Jehovah, till the singing times come, when He appears for their deliverance and the hallelujahs will sweep the earth and the heavens.

But his grief overwhelms him. Perhaps he thought again of all the sneers and mockeries, of all the harsh words, the unfaithful friends and the physical pain he endured. He is occupied with himself and the soul struggle begins anew and culminates in a near collapse. He curses, as Job did, the day in which he was born.



21-24. Oracles concerning reigning kings

Chapter 21

The Prophetic Warning

*1. Zedekiah's inquiry (*Jeremiah 21:1-2*)*

*2. Jehovah's answer through Jeremiah (*Jeremiah 21:3-14*)*

21:1-14. Jeremiah's message to Zedekiah

Jeremiah 21:1-2. It has been said that this chapter is historically misplaced and therefore must be considered an evidence of the composite authorship of this book. The Spirit of God for some reason unknown to us has put it in this place. Zedekiah sent unto Jeremiah Pashur (a different one from the Pashur in the preceding chapter) to inquire as to Nebuchadrezzar, the King of Babylon. This is of course Nebuchadnezzar. The form of his name found in Jeremiah is derived more correctly from the Babylonian, which is "Nabukudurri-usur." Here the great king is mentioned for the first time in Jeremiah. The wicked Zedekiah may have remembered God's dealing with Hezekiah when the Lord annihilated the army of Sennacherib, the Assyrian. Then Zedekiah said: "Peradventure the LORD will deal with us according to all His wondrous works, that he may go up from US."

Jeremiah 21:3-14. Zedekiah (whose name was Mattaniah), the ungodly king, who had been made king by Nebuchadrezzar after he had carried away captives from Jerusalem, heard a message of judgment from Jeremiah. The Babylonian king's army was again before the city, because Zedekiah had revolted and broken his agreement with the king. How could Zedekiah even imagine that a righteous Lord had a message of peace for him? The Lord Himself will now fight against Jerusalem and its wicked king. The enemy will do the appointed judgment work: "he shall smite them with the edge of the sword; he shall not spare them, neither have pity, nor have mercy." The king is to be taken captive. Then he addresses the people and the house of David in no uncertain words, which need no further comment.

Chapter 22

Concerning the Kings of Judah (22:1-23:8)

*1. The message in the house of the king of Judah (*Jeremiah 22:1-9*)*

*2. Touching Shallum, the King of Judah (*Jeremiah 22:11-12*)*

*3. Concerning Jehoiakim and his fate (*Jeremiah 22:13-19*)*

*4. Concerning Coniah and his fate (*Jeremiah 22:20-30*)*

22:1-30. Jeremiah's message concerning other kings of Judah

Jeremiah 22:1-10. What a figure Jeremiah was as he stood, obedient to the divine command, before the royal palace to deliver his God-given message! The

door of mercy still is open. Let them execute judgment, let them stop oppressing the stranger, the widows and orphans, let them shed no longer innocent blood, then the house of David shall prosper. If not, the house shall become a desolation. The nations astonished at the destruction and overthrow of the city will hear the answer that it is "because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD their God and worshipped other gods and served them."

Jeremiah 22:11-12. He is also called Jehoahaz 1 Chronicles 3:15; 2 Kings 23:30-37. He was carried away by Pharaoh-Necho into Egypt; he will return.

Jeremiah 22:13-19. This wicked king and his evil doings are described in these verses. He was a cruel despot, who built his palaces by forced labor; covetousness, shedding of innocent blood, oppression and violence characterized his reign. Then his ignominious burial, the burial of an ass, is predicted. It means that an ass has no burial and so Jehoiakim would have no burial; he is the only king of Judah whose burial is not recorded. It may be possible that Jeremiah added these words by divine command, after this king had cut the roll to pieces and burned it in the fire Jeremiah 36:1-32. The prophet wrote the same words contained in the roll (all these chapters beginning with chapter 2 constitute the roll the king burned), and many others were added. Most likely because he had done that wicked work in cutting the Word of God to pieces and casting it into the fire, this special shameful end was announced. Beware you cutters of the Bible, you mutilators of the Word of God, your end, too, will be an ignominious end!

Jeremiah 22:20-30. Coniah, also called Jehoiachin, Joiakim and Joachim, after a brief reign of a few months had been carried away to Babylon to die there. Then the prophet's voice breaks in with a mighty appeal, "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD." Every true believer feels like shouting these words in the present days of departure from God and rejection of His Word. Then there is a prediction as to Jeconiah, "Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days; for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David and ruling any more in Judah." A curse was thus pronounced upon the house of David in the line of Solomon. But there was still the line of Nathan the son of David. Messiah, the Son of David, could therefore not spring from the line of Solomon; he must come from the line of Nathan. Joseph, the husband of the virgin Mary of Nazareth was a son of David through the line of Solomon, the disinherited line; but Mary of Nazareth was a daughter of David through the line of Nathan.

Chapter 23: 1-8

*1. The false shepherds (*Jeremiah 23:1-4*)*

*2. The True Shepherd (*Jeremiah 23:5-8*)*

Jeremiah 23:1-40. Great Messianic Prophesy

Jeremiah 23:1-4. The word “pastors” means “shepherds.” Ezekiel received a larger message about these false shepherds, the hirelings who did not feed the flock. (See annotations of Ezekiel 34:1-31 The scattered remnant of the Lord’s flock (not the Church, but the remnant of Israel) will yet be gathered out of all countries, be fruitful and increase, no longer fearful, dismayed or in want. It is a prophecy concerning the time when the Shepherd of Israel, their King as well, is manifested.

Jeremiah 23:5-8. A great Messianic prophecy follows. “The Righteous Branch,” the Son of David, whose name is “THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS” (Jehovah Zdidkenu) is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the King who will reign and prosper, executing judgment and justice in the earth. The prophecy is unfulfilled. He came as the Son of David, the promised King. He offered that kingdom to Israel; they rejected Him. But He is coming again, and in that day of glory this great prediction will be accomplished. His people Israel will be saved Romans 11:25-36. Their wonderful restoration from the north and from all the countries will then take place.

Chapter 23:9-40

Condemnation of the False Prophets

*1. Jeremiah’s lament on account of the false prophets (*Jeremiah 23:9-14*)*

*2. The condemnation of these prophets (*Jeremiah 23:15-32*)*

*3. Forgotten and forsaken (*Jeremiah 23:33-40*)*

Jeremiah 23:9-14. The prophet is overwhelmed because of the wicked prophets, because in the LORD’s house wickedness was found. The false prophets of Samaria had led the people into idolatry and the prophets of Judah were guilty of all kinds of immoralities. Like priests, like people; they all became unto the Lord as Sodom, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem like Gomorrah.

Jeremiah 23:15-32. They will be fed with wormwood and will have to drink gall. On account of their false message of peace (Jeremiah 23:17-18), the whirlwind of divine judgment will fall upon them and upon the head of the wicked. They prophesied lies in the name of Jehovah; they were prophets of the deceit of their own heart. They tried to make the people forget the Name of Jehovah. Such is today still the work of apostate teachers, who speak out of the deceit of their hearts, who prophesy lies and who aim at the Name which is above every Name. How different is the word of the Lord, from the idle dreams of these false prophets. "Is not My word like as a fire? saith the LORD and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" (Jeremiah 23:29). Three times the Lord declares He is against these prophets (Jeremiah 23:30-32) .

Jeremiah 23:33-40. If they ask the question, "What is the burden of the LORD?" the answer is to be, "I will cast you off." The burden, or word of the Lord is not to be mentioned again to them. They will be utterly forgotten and forsaken, with everlasting reproach and perpetual shame upon them.

Chapter 24

The Two Baskets of Figs

*1. The vision of the two baskets of figs (*Jeremiah 24:1-3*)*

*2. The vision interpreted (*Jeremiah 24:4-10*)*

24:1-10. Vision of the two baskets of figs

Jeremiah 24:1-3. Jeconiah, with the choicest of the nation, had been carried away into captivity. A large portion remained, and were not taken away, and these attributed their escape from exile to some goodness in them. At that time the prophet had a vision. He saw set before the temple two baskets of figs. The one basket was filled with good figs, the second basket with bad figs.

Jeremiah 24:4-10. The good figs are symbolical of those who were carried away into captivity. They were sent away for their good. He promises them good things. They are going to return; He is going to build them; He will plant them. More than that, He will give them a heart to know that He is the Lord. "For they shall return unto Me with their whole heart." They are never to be plucked up. This prophecy evidently goes beyond the return of the small remnant from Babylon, yet partially at least it was fulfilled. The bad figs are those who remained with Zedekiah in Jerusalem, but they also should be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth, "to be a reproach, a proverb, a taunt and a curse.

Chapter 25

The Seventy Years' Captivity and the Judgment of the Nations

*1. The retrospect (*Jeremiah 25:1-7*)*

*2. The seventy years' captivity announced (*Jeremiah 25:8-11*)*

*3. The punishment of Babylon and its king (*Jeremiah 25:12-14*)*

*4. The wine-cup of fury for the nations (*Jeremiah 25:15-29*)*

*5. The day of the LORD and wrath of God (*Jeremiah 25:30-38*)*

Prediction of the Seventy Year Captivity

Verses 1-11. The exile declared

Jeremiah 25:1-7. The prophet in the fourth year of Jehoiakim addresses the people of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. The fourth year of Jehoiakim was also the first year of Nebuchadrezzar. In this eventful year the battle of Carchemish was fought and Nebuchadrezzar defeated Egypt. The supremacy of Babylon had been insured. At this critical time the prophet gives a retrospect of his ministry among them. From the thirteenth year of Josiah he had spoken to them, but they had not heard. The Lord sent other servants, too, but they did not hear. He puts before them their stubbornness and how they provoked the Lord to anger.

Jeremiah 25:8-11. And now the solemn verdict is announced. The northern power is coming against this land, headed by King Nebuchadrezzar, who is here called for the first time by the Lord, "My servant." All mirth and joy will be taken from them; the whole land shall be a desolation, and they shall serve the king of Babylon for seventy years.

Verses 12-38. Judgment of the nations and the Day of the Lord

Jeremiah 25:12-14. When the seventy years are ended the Babylonian nation and its king (Belshazar) would be punished for their iniquity. All that is written in this book of Jeremiah, concerning Babylon is to be accomplished (including the final desolation). Daniel in Babylon, when he read the book of Jeremiah, dwelt perhaps on this passage, and turned to the Lord in that remarkable prayer recorded in the ninth chapter of the book which bears his name.

Jeremiah 25:15-29. While the Lord thus judged Jerusalem, should the other nations go unpunished? And He answers, “Ye shall not be unpunished, for I will call for a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth, saith the LORD of hosts” (Jeremiah 25:29). This prophecy is most remarkable. It predicts a world war. All nations shall drink and be moved and be mad because of the sword. It includes all the kingdoms of the world which are upon the face of the earth (Jeremiah 25:26). Have we not seen something like this during the past, most horrible war of history? And may this not be the prelude to the day of the Lord, when these nations will have to face the judge and judgment?

Jeremiah 25:30-38. The Yom Jehovah, the day of the LORD, is now announced by the prophet. It is that great future day ushered in by the visible and glorious manifestation of the Lord. All the prophets speak of that day as the day of consummation and glory. It is equally prominent in the New Testament Matthew 24:30; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-12; 2 Peter 3:7-18; Revelation 19:11-21, etc. Jeremiah beholds Him coming from above, with a shout, not the shout with which He calls His own together 1 Thessalonians 4:17, but the shout of judging wrath. He will plead with all flesh. The slain of the Lord shall be many. The howling of the shepherds, the false leaders, because their end is come, concludes this great vision.

Chapter 26

Jeremiah threatened with Death and His Deliverance

*1. The temple like Shiloh, and Jerusalem to be a curse (*Jeremiah 26:1-7*)*

*2. Threatened with death (*Jeremiah 26:8-11*)*

*3. Jeremiah’s defense (*Jeremiah 26:12-15*)*

*4. History remembered and the prophet’s deliverance (*Jeremiah 26:16-24*)*

Verses 1-11. His prediction of the destruction of the temple

Jeremiah 26:1-7. We are now taken back to the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim. (Compare with chapter 7.) The Lord still waits in patience for their repentance. With holy boldness the prophet stands in a place where the worshippers pass to enter the temple and announces the message. The temple is to be like Shiloh, that is forsaken Psalms 78:60. Jerusalem is to be a curse.

Jeremiah 26:8-11. Then he was arrested for his faithfulness and threatened with death, “Thou shalt surely die.” The priests and the prophets were his accusers

before the princes. How often this has been repeated in the history of God's true witnesses! During pagan Rome as well as papal Rome, the false priests and false prophets hated and despised God's witnesses and persecuted them. It is so in our times.

Verses 12-24. Jeremiah's deliverance

Jeremiah 26:12-15. He makes his defense in a few dignified words. He tells them he is Jehovah's messenger. He tells them that he is in their hands, but warns them if they kill him they shed innocent blood. This courage was born of faith. He knows that he is in His hands.

Jeremiah 26:16-24. The princes and people were deeply impressed and declared that he was not worthy of death. This encouraged certain elders to speak, in whose heart some fear seems to have been left. They remembered the prophet Micah, the contemporary of Isaiah, who spoke similar words in the days of Hezekiah Micah 3:12. Hezekiah did not have Micah killed. They warned against so rash a deed. They also mentioned the case of the prophet Urijah, who had also prophesied, as Jeremiah did. He had fled to Egypt, but was brought back, then Jehoiakim killed him. We do not know why his case is mentioned in this connection, unless it is to show the difference between good Hezekiah and wicked Jehoiakim. Then Ahikam, the father of Gedaliah, who was governor under Nebuchadnezzar, stood by him, and he was delivered.

27-28. The sign of the yokes

Chapter 27

27:1-22. The divinely imposed yoke of babylon

The Optimism of the False Prophets Contradicted

*1. The call of Nebuchadnezzar to be the servant of God (*Jeremiah 27:1-11*)*

*2. The call to submit and to serve the king of Babylon (*Jeremiah 27:12-22*)*

Jeremiah 27:1-11. It was in the earlier part of the reign of Zedekiah (Jehoiakim in Jeremiah 27:1 is a clerical error, see Jeremiah 27:3 and Jeremiah 27:12) that Jeremiah is commanded to make bonds and yokes to put them on his neck; then he was to send them to the surrounding nations by the ambassadors at the court of Zedekiah. The verses which follow are of much importance and interest. God speaks as Creator, and in His sovereignty He appoints Nebuchadnezzar as head over the nations and over the beasts of the field, also over the fowls of heaven

Daniel 2:38, not permanently, but for a time. God appointed a new form of government, because Jerusalem had failed, and the theocratic government as vested in the house of David was to pass away. An imperial head is chosen by the Lord from among the Gentiles. He constitutes Nebuchadnezzar His servant; with him and his rule begin the times of the Gentiles. He is the golden head in the dream-image he saw, which young Daniel interpreted by Divine revelation. The times of the Gentiles are fully revealed in Daniel's great prophecies. The predicted end of these times are not passed into history; we are still living in the times of the Gentiles. They end with the second, visible coming of Christ, when Gentile world-dominion, as it started with Nebuchadnezzar, will end, and the kingdom of heaven begins.

This fact--that God has committed power in this world to a man--is very remarkable. In the case of Israel, man had been tried on the ground of obedience to God, and had not been able to possess the blessing that should have resulted from it. Now God abandons this direct government of the world (while still the sovereign Lord above); and, casting off Israel whom He had chosen out from the nations, grouping the latter around the elect people and His own throne in Israel, He subjects the world to one head, and committing power unto man, He places him under a new trial, to prove whether he will own the God who gave him power, and make those happy who are subjected to him. when he can do whatever he will in this world.

Whoever refuses now the new governmental order will be punished by the Lord; the nations that put their neck under the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar, to serve him, will remain in their land.

Jeremiah 27:12-22. He speaks to the king and to the priests and calls them to submit to the new government established with Nebuchadnezzar. He urges them not to believe the lying prophets with their false, optimistic message, who promised smooth things. Every message they uttered, contradicted the Word of God. It is the same in Christendom today. The rationalistic critics have a message of unscriptural optimism concerning the conditions of this age, which contradicts everything made known in the prophetic Word. Part of the vessels from the temple had been carried away. The false prophets said that these vessels would shortly be returned. The Lord dispels this lying message, for He reveals through His prophet that the remaining vessels shall also be taken to Babylon.

Chapter 28

*1. Hananiah, the false prophet (*Jeremiah 28:1-11*)*

*2. The judgment of Hananiah (*Jeremiah 28:12-17*)*

28:1-17. Opposition by false prophets

Jeremiah 28:1-11. One of these lying prophets became very bold, and declared that he had a message from the Lord that the yoke of the Babylonian king was to be broken, and that within two years the temple vessels would be brought back. Jeremiah said "Amen"--let it be so! But he knew it could not be so, for the Lord had spoken to him; he gives a test. Then Hananiah became still more arrogant. Jeremiah had about his neck the yoke (Jeremiah 27:2). Hananiah took it off and broke it and declared again that within two years the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar should be broken. What applause he must have earned from the unbelieving masses about him!

Jeremiah 28:12-17. Instead of yokes of wood there should be yokes of iron, the prophet tells Hananiah. He exposes him as a deceiver whom the Lord had not sent, and announces his fate, that he should die this same year. He died in the seventh month of the same year.

Chapter 29

Jeremiah's Letter to the Exiles, comforting them

*1. Jeremiah's letter (*Jeremiah 29:1-23*)*

*2. Concerning Shemaiah and his false prophecies (*Jeremiah 29:24-32*)*

Verses 1-23. His letter sent to Babylon

Jeremiah 29:1-23. King Zedekiah sent Elasah and Gemariah on a diplomatic mission to King Nebuchadnezzar. Jeremiah used the occasion to send a letter by them to the exiles. The letter first of all makes it clear that their stay in Babylon will not be transitory. They are to settle down, build homes, many, rear families, take wives for their sons and husbands for their daughters. They were to seek the peace of Babylon, for Babylon's peace would mean their own peace. The latter injunction has often been forgotten by the Jews during the past 1900 years, since their great dispersion; often have they fomented strife among the nations where they are strangers.

The false prophets had predicted a speedy return. Some of these false prophets had gone with them to Babylon and were present in the prison camp on the banks of the river Chebar. We read in Ezekiel 11:3 that they ridiculed the Divine command and gave wicked counsel. They felt themselves secure. Ezekiel continued the message of Jeremiah. (See annotations of Ezekiel.) Once more the seventy years are mentioned and what is to take place after they have expired. "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end." He promises an answer to their cry, and if they seek Him, He will be found. How gracious and merciful He is towards His own! In His own time all His gracious purposes will be fully accomplished in that nation, as they were partially accomplished in the return of a remnant after the exile. Jeremiah 29:14 speaks of the larger return "gathered out from all the nations." But those who persistently continued in disobedience, who listened to the false prophets will suffer the predicted fate; for such there will be no deliverance. Two of the false prophets are mentioned by name, Ahab and Zedekiah (not the king). Besides being false prophets, they were adulterers and whoremongers. King Nebuchadnezzar roasted them in the fire (Jeremiah 29:22-23) .

Verses 24-32. Shemaiah's attack and Jeremiah's second letter

Jeremiah 29:24-32. Shemaiah, a Nehelamite, which means "the dreamer," was also in Babylon, and when the captives received the letter from Jeremiah, he answered the letter. The letter was received by a certain Zephaniah, of whom he inquired, "Why hast thou not reproved Jeremiah of Anathoth, which maketh himself a prophet to you?" When Zephaniah received this letter he read it to Jeremiah. The Lord exposes the Nehelamite as a deceiver, and his judgment is announced.

Chapter 30

The Glorious Future of the Nation,

Restoration and Messianic promises (30-31)

*1. The time of Jacob's trouble (*Jeremiah 30:1-11*)*

*2. Zion's desperate condition and the promise of deliverance (*Jeremiah 30:12-17*)*

*3. Restoration and glory (*Jeremiah 30:18-24*)*

30:1-17. The time of trouble for Jacob

Jeremiah 30:1-11. The critics have made havoc with this great prophecy. De Wette, Hitzig, and other rationalists, claim to have discovered that this chapter, and those which follow, are the work of the spurious "second Isaiah." The critics, with their present day echoes in different colleges, reject these chapters as not being Jeremianic. They are totally wrong. This great prophecy, which begins with the thirtieth chapter, is quite in order after all these judgment messages, announcing the doom of Jerusalem and of the nation. What then about the future, that future which all their fathers had cherished, the promises which rested upon the covenant Jehovah made with David? Was now everything to be blotted out and no national hope left? The last siege of Jerusalem was in progress; soon all the threatened judgments would pass fully into history. How perfectly in order is it that now should be given a message of the glorious future of the nation.

Jeremiah is commanded to write in a book all the words Jehovah had spoken; quite sufficient evidence that Jeremiah is the author and that this book is not a patchwork of different supplementers, redactors and compilers.

The first promise in verse three (Jeremiah 30:3) is concerning the coming days in which the people Israel and Judah will return to their God-given land to possess it. Has this promise been fulfilled? Expositors generally say that it was fulfilled in the return from the captivity. But this is not so. Here is a promised return not only of the house of Judah, but a return of the ten tribes also. This has never taken place. In spite of the "British-Israel" hallucination, every sane Bible reader realizes that the house of Israel is still scattered among the nations. This restoration promise will be accomplished in the future. Then we hear what will precede that restoration. It will be a time of great trouble, even the time of Jacob's trouble Matthew 24:1-51; Mark 13:1-37, the great tribulation revealed in other portions of the prophetic Word, notably in Daniel and Revelation. When that time comes "Jacob will be saved out of it." The yoke of the last Gentile world-power (the revived Roman Empire, the ten-horned Beast of Daniel 7:1-28 and Revelation 13:1-18 will then be broken (Jeremiah 30:8) and they will serve the true David, David's Lord and David's Son, our Lord (Jeremiah 30:9). Then follows the message of comfort. How well history has confirmed this one sentence of Jeremiah 30:11 : "Though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee."

Jeremiah 30:12-17. Here is a reminder of Zion's desperate condition and shameful history and how He had to chastise His people and wound them with the wound of an enemy. Such is still their lot and will be down to the end of this

age, a people scattered and afflicted, devoured and spoiled by the nations. But when the time comes, the time of mercy for Zion, her enemies will be dealt with. In arrogant unbelief, these nations, so called "Christian nations," said "Zion is an Outcast"--"whom no man seeketh after" (Jeremiah 30:17); but the Lord says, "I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds."

30:18-24. Israel's restoration to kingdom glory

Jeremiah 30:18-24. The city then will be built again. The voices of praise and joy will be heard once more. He will glorify and increase them. He will be their God and they shall be His people. The whirlwind will strike "the head of the wicked," the wicked false king, the false Messiah, Antichrist. The next chapter is the continuation of this great prophecy.



Chapter 31

*1. The home-going of the nation (*Jeremiah 31:1-9*)*

*2. The joy of salvation (*Jeremiah 31:10-14*)*

*3. The preceding tribulation, sorrow and repentance (*Jeremiah 31:15-21*)*

*4. Assurance (*Jeremiah 31:22-26*)*

*5. The new covenant (*Jeremiah 31:27-34*)*

*6. The everlasting nation (*Jeremiah 31:35-40*)*

31:1-26. The nation's home going and salvation

Jeremiah 31:1-9. Sovereign grace will bring them back and give them the songs of salvation. It is true of Israel "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee"; --it is equally true of us. What a day of joy it will be when they go back home once more, never to leave the old homeland again! Then the watchmen on mount Ephraim cry, "Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion unto the LORD our God." Can there be anything more touching and beautiful than Jeremiah 31:8-9?

Jeremiah 31:10-14. The nations are addressed. oh! that the great nations of today might have an ear to hear this message, "He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him as a shepherd does his flock." His promises made to Israel will not fail. The nations should understand, as they do not, that Israel will yet become the head of all the nations of the earth. What singing that will be in that day of which the prophet speaks (verse 12). What rejoicing after their sorrow! What fullness will be theirs!

Jeremiah 31:15-21. Rachel weeping for her children (Jeremiah 31:5) is quoted in Matthew 2:1-23 in connection with the killing of the boys in Bethlehem. It has also a future fulfilment, when once more Satan will manifest his power as the murderer during the tribulation. But the promise, "They shall come again from the land of the enemy" and "Thy children shall come again to their own border," clearly shows that captivity is likewise meant from which Rachel's children (Joseph and Benjamin, i.e., Ephraim) shall return after the final tribulation and weeping. Physical resurrection is not in view here. Therefore, the next verse speaks of Ephraim moaning and in repentance. Then God's gracious answer "Is Ephraim my dear son?--I will surely have mercy upon him."

Jeremiah 31:22-26. Backsliding Israel is exhorted and the assurance is given, "A woman shall compass a man." It refers to Israel as the woman, the timid, weak, forsaken one, who now will compass a man: that is have power given unto her to become the ruler. (Some have translated this difficult passage, "The woman shall be turned into a man.") Then follows the promise of assurance.

31:27-40. The new covenant and the everlasting nation

Jeremiah 31:27-34. In the preceding verse we read that Jeremiah awoke, so that this message must have come to him in a vision by night, and sweet was his sleep. How refreshing must have been to his troubled soul this wonderful prophecy! The great prediction in these verses is the one concerning the new

covenant. This covenant is not made with Gentiles, nor even with the church as so often erroneously stated. It is the new covenant to be made with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. This is fully confirmed in the Epistle to Hebrews Hebrews 8:8-13. The old covenant is the law-covenant, which the Lord did not make with Gentiles, but with Israel exclusively. The new covenant is of grace. The ground of this new covenant is the sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus Christ, His blood, as we learn from His own words when He instituted the supper. He died for that nation, and therefore all Israel will yet receive the promised blessing of this new covenant. This prophecy is therefore still unfulfilled, for Israel does not enjoy this new covenant now. In the meantime, while Israel has not yet the blessings of this new covenant, Gentiles, who by nature are aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, believing in Christ, possess the blessings of this new covenant to the full. In that coming day of Israel's return, the nation, Israel and Judah, will be born again, know the Lord, and their sins will be remembered no more.

Jeremiah 31:35-40. This word of Jehovah is a complete answer to those in Christendom who think that God has cast away Israel, that they are no longer the chosen people. The Lord makes a condition, "If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all they have done saith the LORD." Neither has heaven been measured, neither has the depth of the earth been searched out, nor will this ever be accomplished. What a faithful covenant-keeping God He is! Jeremiah 31:38-40 have never been fulfilled in the past.

Chapter 32

32. Jeremiah's faith in the restoration

Jeremiah in Prison

*1. Shut up in the court of the prison (*Jeremiah 32:1-5*)*

*2. The revelation of the Lord concerning Hanameel (*Jeremiah 32:6-15*)*

*3. The prophet's prayer (*Jeremiah 32:16-25*)*

*4. Jehovah's answer (*Jeremiah 32:26-44*)*

Verses 1-25. The sign of the prophet's faith

Jeremiah 32:1-5. The siege of Jerusalem began in the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign. It was in the tenth year, a year later (Jeremiah 39:1) that we find Jeremiah

in prison. In order to understand this imprisonment Jeremiah 37:11-21 must be consulted. He was first thrown as a prisoner into the house of Jonathan the scribe. It was a dungeon, perhaps some underground place. He was consigned there. It was a horrible place, for Jeremiah was afraid he might die there (Jeremiah 37:20). Zedekiah seems to have been somewhat favorably inclined towards him. He asked him secretly to his palace and after Jeremiah told the king, in answer to his question about a word from the Lord, that the king should be delivered into the hands of the king of Babylon, Zedekiah on his request released him from the dungeon and put him into the court of the prison, and was kept by the king's order from starvation (Jeremiah 37:21). Here, in our chapter, is the full text of his faithful message; had it been less faithful he might have been released.

Jeremiah 32:6-15. The coming of his cousin with the request to buy his field in Anathoth is divinely announced. The right of redemption was Jeremiah's. (See Leviticus 25:25.) Hanameel came, and Jeremiah, realizing that it was of the Lord, bought the field, paying for it seventeen shekels of silver. The sale was legally transacted and executed; there being two rolls, one sealed, the other open. It was all delivered to Baruch, the faithful secretary of the prophet, mentioned here for the first time. He was instructed to put all in an earthen vessel. By his action the prophet proved his simple faith in the promised return.

Jeremiah 32:16-25. What a beautiful prayer it is which came from the lips of the prisoner! He acknowledges first of all, as we all do in believing prayer the power of God, that there is nothing too hard for the Lord. Then he speaks of the loving kindness and righteousness of the God of Israel, and mentions the past history of the nation. What the Lord had predicted against the city and the nation had been done; the city was given to the Chaldeans. "What Thou hast spoken is come to pass; and behold Thou seest it." He then mentions the fact that the Lord had told him to buy that field. Then the prayer is interrupted, like Daniel's prayer.

Verses 26-44. The Lord's answer

Jeremiah 32:26-44. The answer the Lord gave to praying Jeremiah is twofold. Jeremiah had said in faith, "There is nothing too hard for the LORD." The Lord answered him, "Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh; is there anything too hard for Me?" Then He announces first of all the fate of the doomed city (Jeremiah 32:28-35). After this comes once more the message of comfort and peace looking forward to that blessed future when Israel is gathered out of all countries, brought back to the land--when they shall be His people (Jeremiah 32:36-44) .



Tell of Lachish, site of the fortress city of Lachish

Archaeological light

Tell at Lachish

The Tell at Lachish is imposing. The lower parts were formed from different settlement layers during the Bronze Age. After that period, the site was uninhabited until the 10th century BC. During the 9th century BC is was strongly fortified, and a palace was added. This city lasted until the conquest by Sennacherib in 701BC. Later on there was some rebuilding, but it was only a pale reflection of what it had once been.

The fortifications consisted of a double ring of walls, with the only gate was on the west side; it had a six-chamber gate extending into the city. The center of the city was dominated by a palace and its support buildings. There was a large residential building, a row of six storerooms, an entrance building and an open courtyard. The entrance to the buildings was via an open stairway leading from the large courtyard. A street led directly from the city entrance to the entrance gate of the palace.

Lachish was an important centre of royal administration. The palace seemed to be divided into three areas: a residential building for the governor who administered the surrounding land on behalf of the king; storage magazines for taxes paid in goods and products, or for provisioning of the army or of court

officials; and quarters for servants and staff.

Lachish was certainly the most important city in Judah after Jerusalem. During his campaign in 701BC, Sennacherib sent an embassy to Jerusalem from Lachish. By the time it returned, he had already overrun Lachish, something he must have seen as a significant military victory, since he portrayed the scene in a relief on the palace walls in his capital, Nineveh. In a series of scenes, the Assyrian infantry storm the walls of Lachish, with rows of archers taking aim at the defenders on the walls; the outer walls of the city are stormed; Assyrian battering rams and siege machines advance and then penetrate the walls; Judean captives are marched out of the city, while others are stripped naked and impaled on the Assyrian spears; the captives are tortured and murdered; and then in the last panel King Sennacherib sits on his throne, receiving the servile captives and the booty that has been taken from Lachish. A huge pile of stones, used as the base of a ramp built by the Assyrians to storm the city, can still be seen in the south-western corner of the ruins.

The final destruction of Lachish took place at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar in 587BC - at the same time Jerusalem was destroyed.

The City in biblical times

A city in biblical times could be anything from 6 hectares (15 acres) - Megiddo, to 10 hectares (25 acres - Ai, Gezer and Arad. It was protected by a ring of walls, with gates or posterns. The fortification could be a wall or a rampart. Inside the walls there were houses of varying shapes and sizes, but also monumental buildings which covered a substantial part of the area inside the wall. Among these were the temple and the palace, often at the center of the settlement or in a prominent position. All the houses were accessible via narrow streets.

City walls had different methods of construction and size. The earliest cities have mud brick walls from 2 to 6 meters thick on stone foundations, with projecting semicircular or rectangular towers. In another case, the walls were 8 to 10 meters wide. The gate had towers flanking it on either side.

The earliest type of domestic building was the wide-room house. Its floor was below ground level and the house was entered by two steps. Benches ran along the walls. This basic form was enlarged by the addition of annexes and additional rooms, and a house often had several rooms, in which the entrance from the street was in the shorter wall

.

Until the beginning of the 1st millennium BC, the biblical lands were a place of city states, independent of each other and, if we can judge from the amount of attention lavished on the walls and fortifications, often warring with each other. For much of this time there was an imperial power lurking in the wings - usually Egypt, but also Mesopotamia, Assyria, etc. This power would exercise a certain amount of control, for though generally speaking the area was not rich and not really worth conquering in its own right, it lay on several important trading roads, especially the route between Egypt and the north and east.

In the struggle for power between Egypt and Syria or the rulers of Mesopotamia, it was important to control these routes open.

'Tel Lachish, the mound of the ancient city of Lachish, is located in the lowlands of the Judean Hills, some 40 km. southeast of Jerusalem. The abundance of water sources and the fertile valleys of the area favored the existence of a prosperous city over a considerable period of time.

The mound of the city was first excavated during the 1930s. Systematic and in-depth excavations of large areas of the mound were again conducted between 1973 and 1987.

Far back in history

A large, fortified Canaanite city was established at the beginning of the 2nd millennium BCE on a hillock dominating the surrounding area. It was fortified by a wall and a glacis, a ramp-like structure of compressed earth with a hard, smooth surface of lime plaster. The fortification was completed by a fosse (moat) at the foot of the glacis.

A large palace of numerous rooms and a courtyard, probably the residence of the Canaanite King of Lachish, stood on the acropolis - the highest part of the city. It could not be completely exposed, as a later Israelite palace was built above it.

From letters sent by the kings of Lachish to their overlords, the pharaohs of Egypt (the 14th century BCE el-Amarna correspondence) it may be deducted that Lachish was an important urban center and the seat of the Egyptian governor of southern Canaan.

Two temples are known from this period at Lachish. Finds from the Fosse Temple, at the western foot of the mound, include cult vessels, offering bowls and imported items of pottery, faience and ivory, all evidence of wealth. The

temple on the acropolis, with Egyptian architectural elements, included an entrance chamber, a main hall (16 x 13 m.) and a raised holy of holies. Two octagonal stone columns supported the wooden ceiling, while the walls were decorated with painted plaster.

Canaanite Lachish was totally destroyed by fire at the end of the 12th century BCE. According to one theory, the destruction was wrought by the Philistines of the nearby Coastal Plain; according to another, more widely accepted theory, it was wrought by the Israelites, whose capture and destruction of the city is recorded in the Bible. (Joshua 10:31,32)

The Israelite City

Rebuilt as a fortress-city of the Kingdom of Judah, Lachish gained in importance after the split of the kingdom into Judah and Israel. As the largest city on the western border of the Kingdom of Judah facing the Philistines of the Coastal Plain, Lachish was fortified with a double line of massive mud-brick walls on stone foundations. The main city wall on top of the mound was 6 m. wide, with a sloping glacis supported by a revetment wall along the middle of the slope. The city gate, in the southwestern wall, is one of the largest and most strongly fortified gates known of this period. It consists of an outer gate in a huge tower built of large stones which protrudes from the line of defenses. The gatehouse, on top of the mound, consists of three pairs of chambers with wooden doors on hinges.

A palace-fortress was built on the acropolis and probably served as the residence of the governor appointed by the King of Judah. During the 8th century BCE a new wing was added to the palace, enlarging it to 76 x 36 m. Next to the palace was a courtyard with stables and storerooms; the whole complex was surrounded by a wall with a gatehouse.

The city of Lachish was destroyed by the Assyrian army during Sennacherib’s campaign against the Kingdom of Judah in 701 BCE. The destruction was total; the buildings were burned to the ground and the inhabitants exiled. The Assyrian campaign, during the reign of King Hezekiah, and the encampment of the Assyrian army at Lachish are described in detail in the Bible. (2 Kings 18:14-17; 2 Chronicles 32:9) The conquest of Lachish is depicted in monumental stone reliefs found at Sennacherib’s palace at Nineveh, providing a rare contemporary "photograph" of the battle and conquest. These relief-images of the Assyrian attack have been confirmed by archeological evidence at the site: the attack on Lachish was launched from the southwest; the attackers built a siege ramp against the slope of the mound, which according to calculation

contained some 15,000 tons of stones and earth! The ramp was covered with plaster to allow the Assyrian battering ram to be moved up to the city wall and breach it. The city's defenders constructed a counter-ramp inside the city, thus raising the city wall, which forced the Assyrians to raise the height of their ramp in order to overcome the city's new defenses. The fierceness of the battle is attested to by the remains of weapons, scales of armor, hundreds of slingstones and arrowheads.

During the reign of King Josiah (639-609 BCE), the city of Lachish was rebuilt and fortified. This much poorer city was captured and destroyed by the Babylonian army in 587/6 BCE. (Jeremiah 34:7) In one of the rooms, which opened onto a courtyard outside the city gatehouse, a group of ostraca were found during the excavations in the 1930s. Now known as the Lachish Letters, they constitute an important corpus of Hebrew documents from the First Temple period. Written in paleo-Hebrew script on pottery sherds, they are messages sent by the garrison commander of a small fortress to his commanding officer in Lachish.'

(Quoted from the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Archaeological Sites in Israel - Lachish

Historical and Biblical Research

'A wall looms high and vivid in the northwest corner, bare of the dirt that covers the rest of the tel. It is probably part of the buttressed wall that stood as Lachish resisted the invasion of the Assyrian Empire, 2,700 years ago, during the reign of King Hezekiah over the kingdom of Judah.

Along that buttressed wall, which exploited an earlier Canaanite trench below, one can easily imagine the Judeans perched on its ramparts shooting arrows and hurling stones, torches and perhaps clay jars filled with hot oil down on the invaders.

For it is war - its shadows and all-pervasive biblical (not to mention human) reality - that we see, more than anything else, while picking our way through the undeveloped but potentially riveting site of Lachish.

We can best understand Lachish by staring at the Assyrian wall sculptures which were discovered in Assyria's ancient capital, Nineveh (now Iraq), and other sites, and are now exhibited in the British Museum. The Assyrian rulers lined their palaces with battle scenes advertising the awesome power of their empire.

In its time, Assyria was the strongest regime to have rolled across the ancient Near East. It stretched from east of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers to the Mediterranean Sea, and from just below the Black Sea south to Gaza, Sinai and finally the Nile Delta and points south.

In 701 BCE, the Emperor Sennacherib invaded and subdued the coastal territory of the Philistines, stopping an Egyptian army that rushed north to challenge him. Then he turned random of Judah. Hezekiah paid heavy tribute, but his kingdom was the only pocket left uncontrolled by the empire.

One wall relief, taken from Sennacherib's palace in Nineveh, depicts the battle for Lachish. That town, which guarded the road from the southernmost coast up to Hebron and the southern Judean hill country, faced the full force of Assyrian power and wrath.

Four-wheeled battering rams rolled up a carefully constructed siege ramp and pounded the wall, probing for weaknesses. Ranks of archers and sling-throwers took aim at the defenders on the parapets. The Judeans shot arrows and hurled stones and firebrands.

Bold Assyrian infantrymen raised their shields while trying to heave the scaling ladders up. Some, repulsed, hurtled to earth. Bodies piled up. Screams and smoke filled the air. Still the battering rams pounded.

Assyrian rulers glorified war. They developed specialized corps - cavalry, sappers, combat engineers, snipers, aquatic units - and "modernized" their weapons and strategies. Perhaps that was why Isaiah, who witnessed the growing Assyrian threat, prophesied a time when nations would no longer "study war."

You will see the "modern" military machine Assyria unleashed against Lachish as you follow the path from the parking lot to the tel's gate structure. On your right, the cutaway slope of tightly compacted earth and stones is the Assyrian siege ramp, built against Lachish's southern wall. (Inside the wall, the Judeans built a counter-ramp.)

Near the siege ramp, a path slopes up toward Lachish's ancient gate on what was originally a chariot ramp. As you climb it to the elaborate gate structure, the largest in ancient Israel (Lachish was evidently second in importance only to Jerusalem), note the city wall on your right. An advancing Assyrian, typically carrying his shield on his left arm, would expose his right flank to

archers on the walls.

At the top, the invaders had to break through an outer gate, pivot to the right while they were packed in a small courtyard and exposed to fire from bordering towers, and break through an inner gate, the remains of which you can now walk through.

But the Assyrians surmounted the town's defenses, as they did, according to Sennacherib's own account, at 45 other Judean towns. Inside Lachish's walls, though the site is undeveloped and only partially excavated, there is evidence of fierce burning at the level of the Assyrian invasion. Arrowheads, sling-stones and the crest of an Assyrian helmet offer only hints of the tumult and destruction highlighted in the Assyrian frieze.

The people inside these walls must have been terrified, perhaps huddling in the palace complex that still sits just to the left inside the gate complex. Perhaps, in what might have been a spin-off sanctuary of the Temple in Jerusalem, priests performed desperate rituals in hope of divine intervention.

The residents were right to be afraid, for gruesome fates awaited captives of Assyria. They were uprooted, tortured, led away with bags over their heads, with limbs lopped off, with rings in their noses or lips. The stone relief of Lachish's conquest shows the exile of prisoners as vividly as the battle itself.
The horror recorded at Lachish could be reconstructed at virtually any biblical city or fortress. But toppled stone walls cannot reveal the hatred, the fear, the blood and the destroyed families. In recalling the drama of the Lachish conquest, footage of Kosovan refugees takes on a perspective of timeless, tragic, human experience.

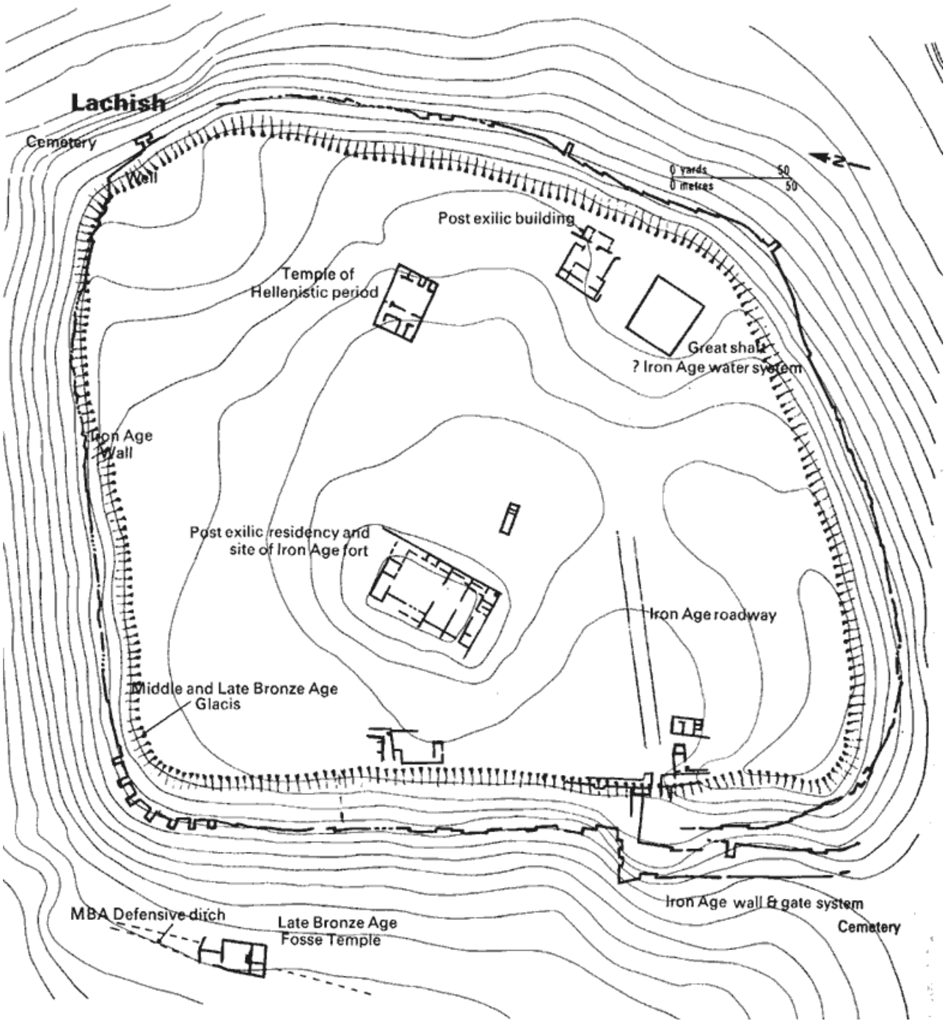
Using Lachish as a base, the Assyrian army moved into the hills against Jerusalem but, according to II Kings (20:35), was smitten by an angel of God and retreated. Lachish was rebuilt, again became the southwest guardian of Judah and later faced a new enemy, the Babylonians.

Evidence linked to the Babylonian attack, though sparse, is chilling and poignant. Among the 18 Hebrew *ostraca* (fragments of inscribed pottery) found in a guardroom, one reads, "Let my lord know that we are watching over the beacon of Lachish, according to the signals which my lord gave, for Azeka is not to be seen."

This is like a movie scene in which the blip of an aircraft disappears from a radar screen. That one simple message encapsulates Lachish's isolation and

doom before the Babylonian onslaught.

The book of Jeremiah (34:7) confirms that Azeka and Lachish were the last cities to fall, leaving Jerusalem alone.' (Quoted from an article by Allan Rabinowitz in the *Jerusalem Post*, 05/06/99)





Chapter 33

33. The great prophecy of the Davidic Kingdom

New Message of Restoration and Blessing

*1. The call to pray and Jerusalem's overthrow (*Jeremiah 33:1-5*)*

*2. Future blessing and glory (*Jeremiah 33:6-14*)*

*3. The Branch of Righteousness; Jerusalem's new name (*Jeremiah 33:15-18*)*

*4. Jehovah's faithfulness (*Jeremiah 33:19-26*)*

Verses 1-5. Jerusalem's imminent overthrow

Jeremiah 33:1-5. Jeremiah is still in prison, as we learn from the first verse. The siege of Jerusalem is on. Then the Lord said, "Call unto Me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not." What an offer and what an assurance! Then the Lord speaks of the great and mighty things, announcing first the overthrow of Jerusalem. The demolished houses of Jerusalem are coming to be used in the defense to serve against the mounds and the sword. There will be great slaughter. (The Hebrew text of Jeremiah 33:4 and Jeremiah 33:5 has many difficulties.)

Verses 6-14. Future blessing and glory

Jeremiah 33:6-14. The next great and mighty things revealed are the future blessings and glory. Health and cure, abundance of peace and truth, a complete return from the captivity of both Judah and Israel, cleansing from all their iniquity, complete forgiveness, all are promised; and let it be remembered none of these promises has been realized. Jeremiah 33:9-13 also concern the future restoration of the land and the city. What a day is yet to come when "the voice of joy, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the voice of them that shall say, Praise the LORD of Hosts" is heard, when Zion sings her beautiful redemption songs. "Behold the days come, saith the LORD, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and the house of Judah." The delay may be long and still deferred according to His eternal purposes; but at the appointed time these days will surely come.

Verses 15-26. The Davidic king and his kingdom

Jeremiah 33:15-18. "In those days" in the coming days, the days of blessing and glory, when Christ comes the second time, He, the Branch of Righteousness will occupy the throne of His father David. (See Luke 1:32.) Then salvation for His people will have come, and the city will receive a new name, the name of Him whose glory covers it, "THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." Likewise will the temple worship be restored. (See annotations on Ezekiel's millennial temple.)

Jeremiah 33:19-26. This is similar to Jeremiah 31:35, etc. His gifts and calling are without repentance. The Davidic covenant stands. He does not cast away His people.



The Great Prophecy of the Davidic Kingdom Explained

The Davidic Covenant in Jeremiah 33

Jeremiah's view of the Davidic Covenant

How did Jeremiah view the Davidic Covenant? We will see that his view was no different from that which was already revealed up to this point in time. The psalms and the prophet Isaiah have shown us that the Davidic Covenant would be fulfilled by one man, the Messiah, being born of the Davidic line who would rule from the throne of David in Jerusalem. This is how the terms of the Davidic line ruling forever would be brought to fruition by the LORD. Jeremiah saw the downfall of the line of David, yet in the midst of that darkness, he saw

the light of the Messiah. Before looking at Jeremiah 33, we are going to look at one other important passage.

Jeremiah verses 22-23

Jeremiah 22-23 is pivotally placed in regards to the continuation of the line of David ruling from Jerusalem. First, let me point out that while Jeremiah 21 seems at first glance to be from the same time frame as 22-23, it is not. Jeremiah 21 is directed toward the one ruling from the throne of David, which at that time was Zedekiah. Jeremiah 22 is also directed toward the one ruling from the throne of David, but examining the rest of the chapter shows that Jehoiakim was presently ruling. The translators rightly placed the chapter division at the point where the prophecy chronologically shifted. As I've noted before, Jeremiah is not chronologically arranged, but thematically arranged. Both prophecies directed at the throne of David (21 and 22-23) are evidence in the divine court that God is justified in bringing correction against the line of David for their repeated sins. Remember that it is God Himself who must punish the line of David according to the terms of the Davidic Covenant.

In chapters 22-23, Jehoiakim is on the throne, Shallum (Jehoahaz) has just been taken into captivity but is not yet dead, and Jeconiah (Coniah) is being groomed to take the throne. God is pronouncing judgment upon all three. God pronounces that Shallum will not return, but will die in the place where he is. Jehoiakim will shortly be disposed of with not so much as a decent burial. Jeconiah will be carried captive to Babylon and die there. In addition to this, no son of Jeconiah will ever rule from the throne of David. That's a fairly complete way of removing the line of David from Jerusalem altogether. Yet Zedekiah ruled for 11 more years, which was not foreseen in this particular prophecy. Since these three prophecies were fulfilled so precisely, this alone should have validated Jeremiah's unction as being from the LORD. One other point of interest concerning Jeconiah is the mention of the signet ring. This was the symbol of authority for the king in those days. With Jehoiakim currently on the throne, God states that even though Jeconiah would shortly be the signet ring on His right hand, God would tear him off and throw him away. In short, God's patience was completely exhausted with the line of David. No longer would the Davidic line represent His authority ruling from Jerusalem.

For a few minutes, focus on 22:3-4 and the promise contained therein. God is castigating the line of David, but it is with the hope that they will repent. If they repent, the fulfilment of the Davidic Covenant will come to fruition. Here the repentance is in the form of executing justice, something that the sons of Josiah had not done. The parallel passage to this is in Jeremiah 17:24-26. Like this

passage, it is directed at the line of David, see 17:19-23. Here the repentance is in the form of observing the Sabbath which was God's covenant sign to the nation of Israel. The repentance of the line of David would result in the fulfilment of the Davidic Covenant. In this passage the promise of Jerusalem being inhabited forever is intertwined with the rule of the Davidic kings from the throne of David. God is giving the kings of Judah fair warning before proceeding with the disciplinary measures promised in II Samuel 7:14 and Psalm 89:30-32. Repent and you will reign from Jerusalem as God promised to David. Continue in wickedness and you will be through. I point out that human sinfulness stood in the way of the line of David fulfilling the mandate to repent. The only way these terms could be fulfilled is if the heart of the nation were circumcised according to the prediction in the Palestinian Covenant, Deuteronomy 30:6, also known as God writing His laws on their hearts according to the New Covenant, Jeremiah 31:33, or known as God giving them one heart according to the Everlasting Covenant, Jeremiah 32:39 and Ezekiel 11:19-20.

In spite of the fact that this passage is primarily about God's righteous judgment upon the Davidic line, God placed a word of hope in this prophecy . Jeremiah 23 continues the oracle by referring to the kings as shepherds. Remember that the kings of David were chosen to shepherd the nation of Israel. Not only were the kings of Israel sinning by performing wickedness, they were also sinning by omitting the acts of righteousness for which they were appointed.

> Shepherding the nation of Israel was their chief duty at which they had utterly failed.

The word of hope comes in 23:5-8. Nothing in this prophecy is anything which had not been already revealed. The poignant position of the prophecy is what is to be noted. The kings in Jerusalem are about to be deposed as chapter 22 tells us. Yet the Messiah will still shoot forth from the line of David as Psalm 89 and other prophecies in Isaiah had foretold. Since these shepherds had failed, God would set up the ultimate shepherd, the righteous Branch, the Messiah.

Jeremiah's entire prophecy is filled with doom and gloom. The nation of Israel will go into captivity. All nations in the entire region will come under the harsh yoke of Babylon. To top it off, the kings of David will not rule from Jerusalem any more. Yet there are days coming when a righteous king will rule. This Branch of David will execute justice, deal wisely, and perform righteousness, all the things that the sons of Josiah had not done. During the Messiah's reign, Judah will be delivered and the nation of Israel will dwell securely. He will be

responsible for the second exodus of the people of Israel. Instead of leading them from bondage in Egypt, they will be re-gathered from all the nations of the earth into the promised land of rest. He will be called "The LORD is our righteousness," which means that the righteousness of His people will be vested in His very person. When you read the darkness of the prophecy in Jeremiah 22, it stands in stark contrast with the hope in Jeremiah 23:5-8. And that is exactly what we see in Jeremiah 33 as well.

The prophecy of the second exodus proves that there is a future reality in which the children of Israel will exist as a nation under the rule of the Messiah. The peace and security which exist during the days of the Messiah will be a future covenant arrangement for the nation of Israel. They will find their identity in the fact that God has re-gathered them from all nations. (The mention of "all nations" should help us to see past the Babylonian captivity which was a deportation to just one nation.) Just as the nation of Israel found their identity in the redemption from the land of Egypt in the past, so in the future, God's deliverance from all nations back into the promised land will demonstrate to the world who they are. "The LORD lives" is the oath which one would take to show one's faith in Him. The identity of the living God in those days will be that of the God who keeps His covenant promises to the nation of Israel.

Jeremiah chapter 33

Jeremiah 33 is set during the reign of Zedekiah. Jeremiah 32 was given almost at the end of Zedekiah's reign as Jerusalem was in the final siege. Jeremiah 33 states that this prophecy was given after Jeremiah 32 while he was still imprisoned. So now we are even closer to the time when Jerusalem will be broken up, Zedekiah blinded and carried captive, and the temple burned to the ground. Apparently, some of the king's personal houses had to be torn down in order to provide materials to temporarily fend off the siege. I'm sure the citizens of Jerusalem saw this as a sign of fear and weakness on the part of their Israelite leaders. Being in the prison, Jeremiah saw these things transpiring before him. Yet in the face of the inevitable destruction of the city of Jerusalem, Jeremiah foretold that the city would one day be praiseworthy to the LORD, 33:6-9. At that time the guilt and sin of Israel will be gone. The rebellion against the LORD will be over. The city of Jerusalem will be glorious before all the nations of the earth.

As this prophecy begins, it is directed toward the nation of Israel as a whole. There are parallels here to the two previous oracles on the future of God's covenant plan. In 33:7, God promises to restore the fortunes of Israel which was previously foretold in 30:18. God also tells that He will cleanse His people from

their sins, which also was mentioned when God revealed the nature of the New Covenant, 31:34. So this prophecy will occur at the same time that Israel enters into the New Covenant relationship with the LORD. Further on, God uses language that reflects Jeremiah 32 when He gave the oracle on the Everlasting Covenant. In 32:43 God drew the contrast between the present desolation and the future blessing. Now in 33:10 God does the exact same thing. The present desolation will not stop God's covenant plan for the nation of Israel from being fulfilled. The future blessing here is explained in terms of people living happily, singing to God, and bringing thanksgiving offerings to His temple. Then beginning in 33:14, God states that the days are coming when He will fulfill the promise the He had made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah, showing that both kingdoms will be united in the future. He then reveals the future of the Davidic Covenant. The Davidic Covenant was not simply a joy and blessing for those descendants of David, but for the nation of Israel as a whole. Think of the joy during the days of Joash to have the Davidic line restored to power, II Chronicles 23, the whole chapter.

As we have previously seen, the future of the city of Jerusalem is intertwined with the rule of the lineage of David. Here in this prophecy of the Davidic Messiah, there is no change in this peculiarity. Jerusalem will be restored, and in the same vein, the Davidic Messiah will rule, 33:14-16. The wording is almost identical to Jeremiah 23:5-6. One slight change is that instead of ***Israel*** dwelling securely, Jeremiah prophesies that Jerusalem will dwell securely. This shows that the Messiah will rule from Jerusalem keeping it secure. In spite of the coming destruction of Jerusalem, there will still come a righteous Branch from David sometime in the future and reign from a restored Jerusalem.

But there is something more in this section that cannot be overlooked. In addition to the continuation of the Davidic Covenant through the future reign of the Messiah, another facet of David's authority will continue. David had set up the temple worship in Jerusalem even before the temple was erected. The Chronicler goes to great lengths to show that David had organized the Levitical priesthood when he established the temple worship, I Chronicles 23-26. When Israel returned from captivity, this temple worship was restored at Zerubbabel's temple, but it was clearly documented as being originally authorized by King David, Ezra 3:10, Nehemiah 12:24, 36, 45-46. So the continuation of the Davidic rule would naturally include the continuation of temple worship.

Here in Jeremiah 33:17-18 God foretells that as the Davidic rule will continue through the Messiah, that the priests will offer up sacrifices continually through the Levitical ministry, mentioning both in the same sentence. Another section of this oracle begins in verse 19 in which God expounds what He has just

revealed. In language that is very similar to Jeremiah 31:35-36, God promises that His covenant with David cannot be broken. Remember how the original promise to David did not contain the word "covenant", but later Psalm 89 did; now we see another use of the phraseology of God's covenant with David. The peculiarities of future fulfilment of this covenant are that David will always have a son ruling on the throne, and that the Levites will always minister unto the LORD. As if to drive the point home even further, God speaks to Jeremiah again beginning in verse 23. He asks Jeremiah to consider the two families of which He has spoken. The two families that have been mentioned are that of the family of David and the family of Levi. So the family of David is intertwined with the family of Levi in the future fulfilment of God's promises for the Messiah to rule.

God compares His covenant with David to His covenant with the cycle of day and night. The idea of the diurnal order being unalterable makes me wonder about the possibility of day and night continuing perpetually. We shouldn't get too hung up on God's language here. Perhaps the time will come when day and night will cease and there will be only day. Perhaps God will allow this order to continue infinitely. The idea that God is conveying here is that the continuation of day and night is something that man cannot ever interfere with. This is set in God's plan such that no man (however powerful) could alter. So it is with the Davidic Covenant. No man will ever be able to alter God's plan for the Davidic Covenant to be fulfilled on God's terms. Let's not get hung up on whether or not day and night will one day come to an end thereby allowing God to be released from His faithfulness to the Davidic Covenant. This language was meant to convey God's unalterable purposes.

When God threw away the signet ring from His right hand, He still had in mind that He would fulfil the Davidic Covenant, just not through Jeconiah any longer. God threw away the signet ring when He removed Jeconiah from ruling in Jerusalem. Yet after the 70 years were fulfilled and Israel was allowed to return, God demonstrated His faithfulness to His covenant by prophesying through Haggai. When the remnant returned to Jerusalem, Zerubbabel returned with them, who was grandson to Jeconiah. When Jehoahaz was deposed, Jehoiakim was ruling vicariously in his place until Jehoahaz died. Then after his death, Jehoiakim no longer ruled as regent, but as king. When Jeconiah was taken captive, Zedekiah was ruling as regent until he might return, Jeremiah 28:4. Jeconiah never returned, but he never died while Zedekiah ruled either. So when Zedekiah was taken captive to Babylon, the rightful heir to the throne was still Jeconiah, even though he only reigned for three months. Zerubbabel came to Jerusalem as the grandson of Jeconiah and heir to the throne of David. While he never took that throne, he served as governor over the city of Jerusalem. This

was Haggai’s post-exilic prophecy for Zerubbabel (Haggai 2: 21-23) (KJV 1611).

> *21:* Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, I will shake the heavens and the earth;
>
> *22:* And I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen; and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother.
>
> *23:* In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith the LORD, and will make thee as a signet: for I have chosen thee, saith the LORD of hosts.

The ring that God cast off from His finger in the days of Jeconiah, He put back on in the days of Zerubbabel. The kingly lineage would not rule from Jerusalem, but the days would come when that same authority promised to the Davidic line would overthrow the kingdoms of this world through the seed of Zerubbabel. Zerubbabel would be the signet ring on His right hand since He would bring forth the Messiah.

To sum up, Jeremiah saw the future of the Davidic Covenant as such. Even though the Davidic rule was coming to an end, God would be faithful to His promise and bring forth the Messiah from the line of David. This Messiah would rule as the Great Shepherd over the completely forgiven and cleansed nation of Israel after He re-gathers His people from all nations from which they had been scattered. In His days there would be peace and security for the nation of Israel and for Jerusalem which would be the place of His royal rule. The temple worship would continue during His reign as the priests continue to offer up sacrifices with the Levites as their ministers. The Messiah would execute justice and righteousness over His joyful people in the land during His rule.



Siege of Lachish

Archaeological light

Lachish is shown under attack, many siege mounds are shown up against the walls. The Assyrians are attacking with their equivalent of the modern tank, the siege engines. The scene would have been painted as well as being a carved relief. The section of the scene to the right gives an idea of what this might have looked like on the walls of Sennacherib's palace. The colours I have used are arbitrary and have not been chosen because I know which colours were used. Archaeologists have on occasion been able to find small traces of the original colour on the stone to establish that the work was coloured and sometimes, what the colour used was. It is also clear from the fresco that the Assyrians revelled in their ability to be cruel and ruthless. Below the tower shown in the image to the left, captives are being hoisted up onto poles outside to the city walls in order to discourage the defenders of the city. This was a common tactic of the Assyrians and is depicted in other sieges.

Perhaps the most fearful part of the Assyrian war machine was the siege engine. Designed to be portable and assembled on site. It is clearly made of several parts and covered with a leather "coat" which was held together with toggles. The engine attacking the tower in the images above is cut out below. It seems that the defensive tactic was to try to set the siege engine on fire. Many fire

brands are being thrown down onto the engine and the attackers. In turn the engine was protected from fire by constant dowsing with water, which would have needed constant re-supply.

This part of the above battle scene shows many things happening at once, though this is an artistic representation. Whilst those on the tower defend and the Assyrians attack, other Jews are seen leaving the city, defeated and surrendering to the Assyrian army.

Chapter 34

Chapter 34:1-7

Jeremiah Warns Zedekiah

The besieging army was before the walls of Jerusalem when the prophet is commanded to go to the king and tell him that the city will soon be burned. He announced also Zedekiah's fate. He could not escape, but would be delivered into the hands of the king of Babylon. He would see Nebuchadnezzar eye to eye, speak with him mouth to mouth, and then be taken to Babylon. Ezekiel said he should not see Babylon Ezekiel 12:13. Both statements are true. He saw the king as a prisoner at Riblah and there his eyes were put out 2 Kings 25:6-30, and then he was taken away to Babylon. Yet he was not to die by the sword, but in peace. And Jeremiah discharged faithfully his message.

Chapter 34:8-22

Verses 8-22. Zedekiah's treachery and the Message of Condemnation

The king had made a covenant that all Hebrew slaves should be released Exodus 21:1-36; Deuteronomy 15:12-23. The princes and people agreed, but afterwards broke the covenant. The message of condemnation tells them, since they had done this, that the Lord will set them free to fall a prey to the sword, the pestilence and famine. The text explains itself.

Chapter 35

The Loyalty of the Rechabites and the Unfaithful Jews

*1. The command concerning the Rechabites (*Jeremiah 35:1-11*)*

*2. The lesson for the Jews (*Jeremiah 35:12-19*)*

Verses 1-11. The command concerning them

Verses 12-19. The lesson of the Jews

The Rechabites were Kenites and were numbered with the children of Israel 1 Chronicles 2:55. During the reign of Jehoiakim the incident of this chapter happened. The critics may rave against the "unchronological" construction of Jeremiah jumping from one period into another, but there we see the guiding hand of the Spirit in the arrangement of these events. It is perfectly in order that this should come next to the chapter which relates the broken covenant. A careful reading and study of this chapter will bring out the lesson of their faithfulness to their father's command, and the unfaithfulness of the Jews to God's command.



Jeremiah 36:1-10: Baruch the son of Neriah wrote and then read the prophesying words from God and Jeremiah unto the people of Judah.
Jeremiah 36:11-25: A few princes and the king of Judah heard God's warnings from Jeremiah's scroll, but they didn't humble themselves, instead Jehoiakim king of Judah burnt that scroll piece by piece. Jeremiah 36:26: God hid and protected Jeremiah and Baruch from the king of Judah. Jeremiah 36:27-32: By God's command Jeremiah and Baruch made another prophesying scroll against the people of Judah and against their king.

Chapter 36

36. Jehoiakim’s opposition to the Word of God

The Indestructibility of the Word of God

*1. The writing of the roll (*Jeremiah 36:1-4*)*

*2. The reading of the roll (*Jeremiah 36:4-20*)*

*3. The king cuts and burns the roll (*Jeremiah 36:21-26*)*

*4. The indestructibility of the Word of God (*Jeremiah 36:27-32*)*

Verses 1-20. The reading of the scroll

Jeremiah 36:1-4. Once more we are taken back to the fourth year of Jehoiakim. Jeremiah is now commanded to commit all the words Jehovah had spoken to him to writing. It was for the purpose that the people might hear of all the evil and that they might yet consider it and turn to the Lord to be forgiven. How gracious and merciful He is! He then dictated all the words to Baruch, who wrote them down. But, asks a critic, how could he remember all he had spoken? The same Spirit who communicated the messages to him, re-communicated them to the prophet.

Jeremiah 36:4-20. Jeremiah was “shut in,” which, however, does not mean that he was a prisoner (see Jeremiah 36:19); it probably means that he was not permitted to enter the LORD’s house on account of some ceremonial impurity. So he sent Baruch, his amanuensis, to read the scroll to the people on the fasting day, and when all the people had come together, Baruch read the roll at the entry of the new gate. Michaiah, one of the sons of Gemariah, was deeply moved by what he had heard, went to the place where the princes sat in counsel and told them what he had heard from Baruch’s lips. Baruch was then commanded to appear before the princes to read the roll to them. What they heard frightened them. They declared they would tell the king.

Verses 21-26. Jehoiakim cuts and burns the roll

Jeremiah 36:21-26. The king sent for the roll. The king listened to but a few of the leaves. Then, energized by the devil, he pulled out his penknife, cut the roll, and, to make sure that the roll would be destroyed, he cast it into the open fire, and with keen satisfaction he watched till the roll was consumed. Elnathan, Delaiah, and Gemariah tried to keep him from doing this evil deed, but he

refused to listen to them. These three had at least some reverence for the Word of God, and therefore the Holy Spirit records their names. The king was not satisfied with this. His satanic anger was so aroused that he wanted to have Baruch and Jeremiah apprehended. Like the mad king Saul, he probably thought of killing them both. But the Lord hid them.

What Jehoiakim did, has been done over and over again. It is being done today as never before in the history of Christendom. It is being done by the destructive critics, in colleges and universities; it is done by the men who have produced the Shorter New Testament and the Shorter Old Testament, by those who advocate an abridged Bible, by others who, like the English writer Wells, want a new Bible. The same power of darkness is behind all these wicked attempts to mutilate the Word of God. Jehoiakim's work is nothing in comparison with these twentieth century infidels, because these aim at the most precious, the most blessed revelation of God, the doctrine of Christ. Their condemnation will be far greater than that of the Jewish king.

Verses 27-32. Indestructibility of God's Word

Jeremiah 36:27-32. But did the king destroy the Word of God? One might just as well speak of destroying God Himself. Neither God nor His Word can ever be affected by the efforts of men inspired by the enemy of the truth of God. The Word of God endureth forever. It is, like God, eternal. How the Bibles have been burned a thousand times over again! In pagan Rome and papal Rome Satan has raged against the Bible. His Word lives on. And now the devil, camouflaged as an angel of light, in the guise of "devout scholarship" and "reverent criticism" tries it again. His Word lives on! Emperors and popes, philosophers and infidels who attacked the Bible are gone; the Bible is still with us. Jeremiah is told to take another roll. Once more the Lord dictates the same words to him, and Jeremiah again dictates them to Baruch, "with many like words," including a judgment message of the miserable end of the wicked king.

Jeremiah and Zedekiah and the Fall of Jerusalem (37-39)

37-38. Jeremiah's experience during the siege

Chapter 37

*1. Jeremiah's warning (*Jeremiah 37:1-10*)*

*2. Jeremiah's arrest (*Jeremiah 37:11-21*)*

37:1-10. Jeremiah's response to Zedekiah's inquiry

Jeremiah 37:1-10. To understand more fully these chapters it must be remembered that the besieging army before the gates of Jerusalem was temporarily withdrawn, because an Egyptian army had appeared against it. This was no doubt an occasion for the false prophets to preach their false hope, so that the people were deceived. Once more Zedekiah sent to the prophet a deputation (Jeremiah 21:1) after Nebuchadnezzar had made him king. The occasion was on account of the withdrawal of the Chaldean army (Jeremiah 37:5). They thought that it was surely a good sign and expected a favorable message. The false hope with which they were deceiving themselves was swept away by the word of Jehovah as it came to the prophet (Jeremiah 37:7-10). There was no hope and after Zedekiah had rebelled (see our annotations on 2 Kings 24:1-20; 2 Kings 25:1-30, the king of Babylon came and burnt the city with fire.

37:11-38:13. Jeremiah's arrest

Jeremiah 37:11-21. When the Chaldean army had left, Jeremiah went forth to go to his hometown Anathoth, for what is not revealed. He may have gone to claim his portion which belonged to him as priest. When, in the gate of Benjamin a captain arrested him, charging the prophet with desertion, he denied the charge. Such a charge could easily be made on account of Jeremiah's former exhortation to submit to the Chaldeans. He is put in prison in the house of Jonathan the scribe; but later the dungeon is changed to the court of the prison. (See the annotations to Jeremiah 32:2.)

We give a diagram which illustrates the chronology of the siege of Jerusalem and the fall of the city.

I. The Siege begun in the ninth year

Jeremiah 39:1.. Siege begun

Jeremiah 34:10.............................Manumission of slaves

II. The Siege raised temporarily in the ninth or tenth year

Jeremiah 37:3-10============**Jeremiah 21:1-7........**Jeremiah consulted by deputies from the king.

Jeremiah 34:8-22 ....Re-enthralment of slaves.

Jeremiah 37:11-16.. Jeremiah seized, and imprisoned in Jonathan's house.

III. The Siege renewed in the ninth or tenth year

Jeremiah 37:17-21=Jeremiah 32:1-5 = Jeremiah 34:1-7 Jeremiah brought in tenth year to be secretly consulted by the king: put afterwards in court of guard.

Jeremiah 32:6-44 Field bought by Jeremiah.

Jeremiah 33:1-26 Further prophecy in court of guard.

Jeremiah 38:1-3=Jeremiah 21:8-10.Jeremiah advises people to desert to Chaldeans.

Jeremiah 38:4-6. Jeremiah put in miry dungeon.

Jeremiah 38:7-13. Jeremiah restored by Ebed-melech to court of guard.

Jeremiah 38:14-28. Jeremiah consulted by king in third entry of Temple: remanded to court of guard.

IV. The Siege ended in the eleventh year

Jeremiah 39:1-14.City taken and destroyed.

Chapter 38

*1. Jeremiah in the dungeon and his rescue (*Jeremiah 38:1-13*)*

*2. Jeremiah with Zedekiah: His last appeal (*Jeremiah 38:14-28*)*

Jeremiah 38:1-13. Jeremiah is next accused of high treason. The charge is based on his message, given to him by the Lord: "He that goeth forth to the Chaldeans shall live." Like the conscientious objectors during the past war, they accused him of being unpatriotic. "This man seeketh not the welfare of this people, but the hurt." They demand his life. In the sixth verse we see him in a deep dungeon, into which he was put by means of ropes. And Jeremiah sank into the vile mire. This reminds us of Him, our blessed Lord, who was also accused by false witnesses, and who went Himself into the horrible pit and the miry clay, into the deepest suffering and the jaws of death, to take us out of the dungeon, where sin has put us. The wicked princes evidently meant to leave Jeremiah in that dungeon to suffer a horrible death.

But the servant of the Lord was not in the hands of the princes, but in the hands of his Master. God chooses for the deliverer a slave, an Ethiopian, Ebed-melech (servant of the king). The heart of this Ethiopian eunuch was touched with pity. He goes to the king, who seems to have been ignorant about what had been done to Jeremiah and tells him that Jeremiah is likely to starve to death in the filthy hole where they had put him. The king commands the eunuch to act at once with thirty men to deliver Jeremiah. With what tenderness, to spare the man of God all needless pain, Ebed-melech carried out the king's wish (Jeremiah 38:12)!

38:14-28. Jeremiah's final appeal to Zedekiah

Jeremiah 38:14-28. This is a great dramatic scene. Zedekiah sends once more for Jeremiah. We suppose the filth of the dungeon was still clinging to the prophet's garments. The king wants to know something. "Hide nothing from me," he demands. He may rest assured that the prophet of holy courage hides nothing. But Jeremiah asks two questions: "Wilt thou not surely put me to death? And if I give thee counsel, wilt thou not hearken unto me?" The first question the king answers: "I will not put thee to death." The second question he leaves unanswered. His heart was hardened like Pharaoh's heart.

He gives him once more the message of Jehovah: Go forth to the king of Babylon, acknowledge his authority, believe in My Word and thou shalt live and thine house; then Jerusalem will not be burned. But if not, then you cannot escape and the doom of the city is sealed. The king shrinks from such a surrender. Terrors of an imaginary kind seize hold on him. He fears the Babylonian king will deliver him into the hands of the Jews who had deserted already, and that they would mock him and ill-treat him. Jeremiah pleads once more. It is his final appeal: "Obey, I beseech thee, the voice of the LORD." But the king refuses. The final request he made of Jeremiah but reveals his miserable character. The last interview has ended. Jeremiah remains in the prison and was there when Jerusalem was taken.



The Old City of Jerusalem

The Psalmist's oath: "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning" (Psalm 137:5).

Jerusalem, resting in the Judean Hills, was established 3000 years ago by King David as the capital of the Jewish nation. Jerusalem is the modern capital of the State of Israel, but not internationally recognized. Jews have been living in Jerusalem continuously for nearly two millennia. They have constituted the largest single group of inhabitants there since the 1840's.

The Old City is divided into quarters, named after the four communities that inhabited it during the Middle Ages: Arab, Jewish, Christian and Armenian.

No wonder Jerusalem has such a tremendous impact, both locally and internationally. To Jews, Jerusalem has always been "The Holy City". The Wailing Wall at the foot of Temple Mount is all that remains of Jerusalem's second temple and is Judaism's most important place of prayer.

For Christians, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is thought to contain the tomb where Jesus was laid to rest after the Crucifixion, having carried the cross through the city along the Via Dolorosa.

The Dome of the Rock on Temple Mount is Islam's third most important religious site (after Mecca and Medina), and it is from here that Muhammad is believed to have ascended to heaven.

Chapter 39

The fall of Jerusalem

*1. The fall of Jerusalem and the fate of Zedekiah (*Jeremiah 39:1-9*)*

*2. Nebuchadnezzar's kindness to Jeremiah (*Jeremiah 39:10-14*)*

*3. Ebed-melech's reward (*Jeremiah 39:15-18*)*

Verses 1-10. The burning of the city and fate of Zedekiah

Jeremiah 39:1-9. The Word of God comes true; the prophecy of Jeremiah is vindicated! The mighty army of Nebuchadnezzar returned to the city; for many months the siege goes on under indescribable suffering. How horrible it must have been! Then the city fell and the victors rushed in; the work of slaughter and burning began. According to Jewish tradition it was on the ninth day of the month Ab. On the same date in the year 70 of our era, the city was destroyed again and the temple burned, announced some forty years before by one greater than Jeremiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. Ever since, Jerusalem has been trodden down by the Gentiles and is so still. The prophetic Word tells us of a final great tribulation which will sweep over the land, and the restored, unbelieving nation, and once more armies will gather before the city.

Zedekiah tried to escape with his men of war, but is captured. Cruelly his boys are slaughtered in his sight--the last thing his eyes beheld, for immediately after his eyes were put out. Bound with chains he is led to Babylon. All the houses of Jerusalem go up in flames; the walls are demolished and the remnant of the people are carried away prisoners (Jeremiah 52:4-16). The poorest are permitted to remain and were treated mercifully. God remembers the poor and they are spared. For all we know, these poor people, who had nothing, were the godly, those who wept over the conditions and who cried to God for help. Their prayer, the prayer of the needy, was answered.

Jeremiah 39:10-14. And if the poor were remembered, the prophet was likewise treated with great kindness. The Babylonian king commanded: "Take him, and look well to him, and do him no harm; but do unto him even as he shall say unto thee." Nebuzar-adan found the great man of God in the prison. The princes had to come and take him from the prison house of humiliation. What an

exaltation! He dwelt among the people. He cast his lot with the poor, who had nothing. We doubt not Nebuchadnezzar knew much of the history we have followed, that which transpired in Jerusalem during the siege. Perhaps he even knew the great messages concerning himself. But it was the Lord who made him act as he did. His loving eye was open above His servant, who had served so faithfully.

Verses 11-18. Kind treatment of Jeremiah

Jeremiah 39:15-18. And now the deliverer of Jeremiah, the Ethiopian eunuch, receives his reward. This message was previously given before the city fell into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, when Jeremiah was still in prison. It is put here into this place for a very definite purpose, which once more answers the puerile charges of the critics.

It is when judgment comes that the faithful are rewarded. This is the lesson. While the ungodly fell and were carried away, the poor remained and were spared; Jeremiah is well treated, and Ebed-melech receives his reward. So will it be when the Lord comes.

III. After the Fall of Jerusalem (40-45)

Chapter 40-41

The Treachery in the Land and the Flight to Egypt, murder of Gedaliah

*1. Jeremiah's choice (*Jeremiah 40:1-6*)*

*2. Gedaliah and Ishmael's deed (*Jeremiah 40:7-16*;* Jeremiah 41:1-3*)*

*3. Ishmael's further atrocities and retreat (*Jeremiah 41:4-18*)*

40:1-8. Jeremiah chooses to cast his lot with Gedaliah

Jeremiah 40:1-6. The opening paragraph of this chapter tells us of the choice which was given to Jeremiah. He was loosed from the prisoner's chains and told by the captain of the guard "If it seems good unto thee to come with me into Babylon, come and I will look well unto thee, but if it seem ill unto thee to come with me to Babylon, forbear; behold all the land is before thee, whither it seemeth good and convenient for thee to go, thither go." Jeremiah decided to stay with his people in the land.

40:9-16. Plot against Gedaliah

Jeremiah 40:7-16; Jeremiah 41:1-3. The history of this section is as follows: Gedaliah had been made governor by the victorious king. When the captains heard it they came to him at Mizpah and Gedaliah exhorted them to loyalty to the Chaldeans. Then Gedaliah is warned that Baalis, the King of Ammon, has sent Ishmael to assassinate him, but Gedaliah refuses to believe the report. Then Johanan declares himself ready to kill Ishmael, so that the dreadful results of the murder of the governor Gedaliah might be averted. Gedaliah thinks it is all slander and forbids it. In the seventh month Ishmael, with ten men, who are being entertained by Gedaliah, murders him and all the Jews and Chaldeans, who are present. It is a horrible story.

41:1-18. The crime penetrated

Jeremiah 41:4-18. The next day Ishmael met eighty men who came from the north; he invited them to come to Gedaliah, who was dead in his house. When they came to the place he slew them, except ten men, who offered to reveal to him hidden treasures of food. Then he carried off all the rest of the people who were left in Mizpah, to go to the land of Ammon. When Johanan and the captains heard of what Ishmael had done, they pursued him unto Gibeon, but Ishmael with eight men escaped to the Ammonites. Johanan took those whom they had rescued out of the clutches of the monster Ishmael, and, fearing the Chaldeans, purposed to go to Egypt.

42-43. The remnant's flight into Egypt

Chapter 42

*1. Jeremiah the intercessor (*Jeremiah 42:1-6*)*

*2. The answer from Jehovah (*Jeremiah 42:7-22*)*

42:1-22. Jeremiah the intercessor

Jeremiah 42:1-6. The remnant, the few who were left after the terrible happenings recorded in the preceding chapter were now cast upon the Lord and besought the prophet to pray for them: "That the LORD thy God may show us the way wherein we may walk, and the thing that we may do." They believed in Jeremiah as a man of God. He promises to do so, and when the answer comes he will not keep back anything.

Jeremiah 42:7-22. The answer came ten days later. Then the word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah. If he had spoken of himself, sat down and thought out by himself what they were to do now he would have waited ten days. But it was not his counsel, not his opinion or advice; the Lord's answer to the divine counsel is that they should abide in the land and that the king of Babylon would not hinder them in any way. Then the Lord would plant them and build them up. The Lord promises them mercies and salvation. But if they went down to Egypt, the Lord's anger would be upon them and judgment would overtake them.

In their hearts they had a desire to go to Egypt. He who is the searcher of hearts knew all about it. They used deceit, and now the Lord, knowing that they would not obey, announced through the prophet that they should die by the sword, the famine and the pestilence.

Chapter 43

*1. The rebellion against Jeremiah (*Jeremiah 43:1-7*)*

*2. Jeremiah's prediction about the conquest of Egypt (*Jeremiah 43:8-13*)*

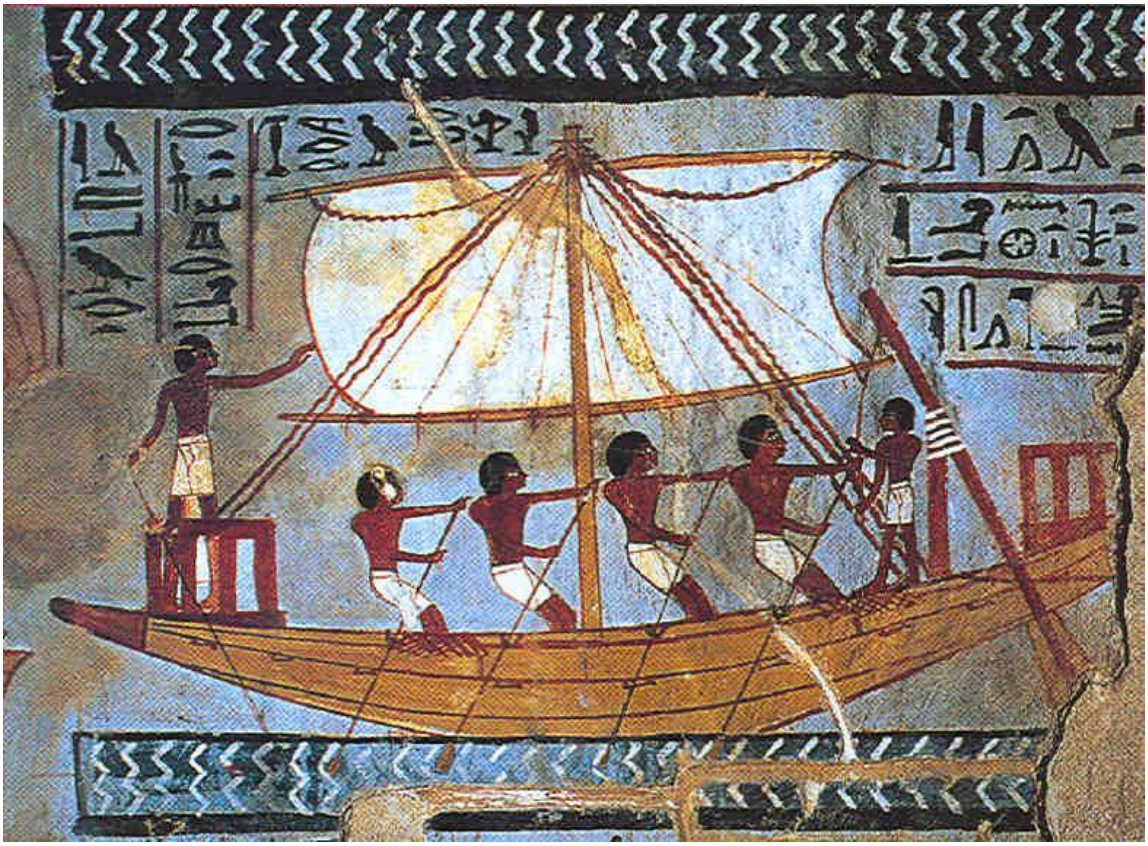
43:1-7. Rebellion against Jeremiah and the trip to Egypt

Jeremiah 43:1-7. No sooner had Jeremiah finished communicating the divine answer, but the captains and the proud men denounced him. They charged him that he spoke falsely, that all he had said was at the instigation of Baruch, that both were traitors. Then the leaders did not obey the voice of the Lord to dwell in the land; they took the remnant of Judah (Jeremiah 43:5 is explained by Jeremiah 40:11-12) all the people, including Jeremiah and Baruch, to lead them down to Egypt, and finally they settled in Tahpanhes (Daphne), which was in the northeastern part, on the road out of Egypt to Palestine.

43:8-13. Jeremiah's prediction of Nebuchadnezzar's conquest of Egypt

Jeremiah 43:8-13. Then Jeremiah was commanded by the Lord to take great stones and bury them at the entry of Pharaoh's house in Tahpanhes, so that all the men of Judah could be witnesses of it. In 1886 the Egyptologist, Professor Petrie, excavated at Tahpanhes a brick pavement before a kind of a palace, which probably was the place where Jeremiah hid the stones. The ruin was Kasr el BintJehudi, which means, "the palace of the daughter of Judah," the place evidently assigned to the daughters of Zedekiah. (See Jeremiah 43:6.) The word brick-kiln means a pavement of bricks. Then, after having buried the stones, he announced that Nebuchadnezzar would come and set his throne there also, that he would conquer Egypt, smite it and burn the idol temples there. Such an

invasion took place about 568 B.C., when the Egyptian King Amasis was defeated. The pillars mentioned in Jeremiah 43:13 are obelisks, and Beth-Shemesh means “the house of the Sun” (Heliopolis or On).



At Thebes (modern Luxor)

Archaeological light

Thebes lay on either side of the Nile River. It is one of the famed cities of antiquity and the capital of the ancient Egyptian Empire at its heyday. The remains of ancient Thebes constitute one of the largest and most remarkable archaeological sites in the world. The discoveries made at this site - now the modern city of Luxor - are responsible for much of our knowledge of Egyptian civilization ... Modern day Luxor is one of the foremost places for tourists from all over the world and has great attractions like the Valley of the Kings -- Valley of the Queens -- Temple of Hatshepsut and the temple structure at Karnak (north of Luxor). The name of the city comes from Arabic for *the palaces* . . .

Thebes already existed in the third millenniun BC (Pyramid Age) but only achieved political prominence when her princes reunited Egypt circa 2040 BC (Eleventh Dynasty) and ushered in the prosperous Middle Kingdom era of the

Twelfth and Thirteenth Dynasties. Hyksos rule brought eclipse -- but a new line of Thebans eventually ejected the Asian alien rule -- again reuniting Egypt and ushering in the brilliant age of the New Kingdom (Eighteenth-Twentieth Dynasties circa 1550-1070 BC). At this time the administrative capital of Egypt was moved back to Memphis as being more practical -- but Thebes remained the southern capital and sacred city of the God Amun -- a status it held for a further one thousand years ...

Chapter 44

44. Jeremiah’s final plea in Egypt

*1. The message to the Jews (*Jeremiah 44:1-10*)*

*2. Their punishment (*Jeremiah 44:11-14*)*

*3. Worshipping the queen of heaven (*Jeremiah 44:15-19*)*

*4. Jehovah’s answer (*Jeremiah 44:20-28*)*

*5. The sign: Pharaoh-Hophra’s Defeat (*Jeremiah 44:29-30*)*

Verses 1-19. His expostulation with the Jews in Egypt

Jeremiah 44:1-10. The message is concerning all the Jews who were now dwelling in Egypt. Besides being in Tahpanhes, they were also in Noph (Memphis) and in Pathros, which was in the upper Egypt. Not long ago ancient papyri in Aramaic were discovered which show that there was a Jewish colony in that part of Egypt. Jeremiah reminds them in his message how God had dealt with Jerusalem and Judah on account of their idolatries, though He had sent prophets to warn them. And now they were doing the same thing in Egypt. “You too bring now utter ruin upon yourselves and all your own.”

Jeremiah 44:11-14. This announces their coming punishment. “Behold I will set my face against you for evil, and to cut off all Israel.” They are to be punished as Jerusalem was.

Jeremiah 44:15-19. What heart-hardness to say to the man of God, “We will not hearken.” They intended to perform their vows to worship “the queen of Heaven.” All they said was, it was well with us when we worshipped the queen of Heaven in the homeland. The women seem to have been concerned mostly in this, but they did so with the knowledge and the consent of their husbands. See about the queen of Heaven and the worship, chapter 7 and the annotations there.

They claimed that all the disaster which had come on them was the result of abandoning their evil practices. What defiance and wickedness, the fruit of their unbelieving hearts! Still greater is the defiance and wickedness of today, when the cross and the gospel of Christ are deliberately rejected.

Verses 20-30. The Lord's answer and sign

Jeremiah 44:20-28. The answer is plain enough, and they heard what their fate would be for their deliberate unbelief and disobedience. These are solemn words, and the Lord said, "They shall know whose Word shall stand, Mine or theirs." God's Word will always stand, and so will those who stand by the Word of God and put their trust in it.

Jeremiah 44:29-30. He gives them a sign that such will be the case. Hophra is to be given into the hands of his enemies. This happened a few years before Nebuchadrezzar defeated Amasis, who had succeeded Hophra.

Chapter 45

45. Jeremiah's message to Baruch recalled

Verses 1-3. Baruch's initial complaint

Verses 4-5. The Lord's sustaining promise

This is the shortest chapter and contains a special message to Baruch, the companion and secretary of the prophet Jeremiah. It must be noticed that this did not take place in Egypt, where now the prophet and his friend sojourned, but it was in the fourth year of Jehoiakim. Baruch had just finished writing the words which Jeremiah dictated. It was no doubt a strenuous task, and when Baruch laid down his pen, the work having been finished, the Lord sent him a special message, showing that He had not forgotten the faithful scribe. He, too, was deeply exercised over the existing conditions; he shared the grief and sorrow of the prophet. But there must have been a measure of disappointment in Baruch's heart. Had he expected some special recognition? Was he seeking something for himself, expecting great things? Had he planned and was he lifted up with some high ambition? It would seem that such was the case, for He who knows the thoughts of His creatures from afar said to him: "And seeketh thou great things for thyself? Seek them not." It is the very heart of the old nature to seek great things, to be ambitious for earthly possessions and honors, to please oneself. God's people need to watch against this more than against anything else. It is the very crime of the devil, pride 1 Timothy 3:66). Every high ambition must be dethroned; the only ambition worthy of a child of God is to please Him, who

lived on earth, never pleasing Himself, who made of Himself no reputation. How it ought to ring in our hearts daily: “Seeketh thou great things? Seek them not.” Seek not recognition in this poor age; wait for His day. And Baruch is assured of God’s protection and care.

IV. The Prophecies concerning the Gentile Nations

Chapter 46

46. Prophesy against Egypt

This section of prophecies against foreign nations, chapters 46-51, compares with Isaiah chapters 13-23 and Ezekiel 25-32.

Concerning Egypt

*1. Prophecy about Pharaoh-Necho (*Jeremiah 46:1-12*)*

*2. Nebuchadnezzar’s invasion of Egypt (*Jeremiah 46:13-26*)*

*3. A message of comfort (*Jeremiah 46:27-28*)*

Verses 1-12. Prediction concerning Pharaoh-Necho

Jeremiah 46:1-5. This Pharaoh made an attempt to invade the territory of the king of Babylon, but was defeated by Nebuchadnezzar in a battle on the river Euphrates at Carchemish. This prophecy was given about eighteen years before the fall of Jerusalem. All was literally fulfilled.

Verses 13-26. Nebuchadnezzar’s invasion of Egypt

Jeremiah 46:13-26. This was given after the fall of Jerusalem, when the remnant had gone to Egypt. (See chapters 43 and 44.) This also was fulfilled. Jeremiah 46:26 promises a future restoration of Egypt. Compare this with Isaiah’s prophecy (Isaiah 19:19-25) .

Verses 27-28. Promise of future blessing to Israel

Jeremiah 46:27-28. This blessed message of comfort also awaits its final great fulfilment in the coming days of promised blessing for Jacob’s seed.

Chapter 47

47. Prophecy against the Philistines

Concerning the Philistines

Verses 1-4. The advance of Nebuchadnezzar

Verses 5-7. Results of Nebuchadnezzar's invasion

This brief chapter is concerning the inhabitants of the borderland of Canaan, called Philistia. This announced judgment was fulfilled a short time after it was spoken by the prophet.

Chapter 48

Concerning Moab (Prophecy against Moab)

*1. The overthrow of Moab (*Jeremiah 48:1-10*)*

*2. The humiliation of Moab (*Jeremiah 48:11-19*)*

*3. Reaping what they sowed (*Jeremiah 48:20-28*)*

*4. Destroyed on account of its pride (*Jeremiah 48:29-47*)*

Verses 1-19. The overthrow of Moab

Verses 20-47. Reason for the overthrow

With these divisions the chapter may be studied in detail. Moab was of incestuous off spring Genesis 19:37. Israel is now exhorted to flee and save itself because Moab is to be destroyed. Moab's national deity was Chemosh, who was also worshipped by the sister nation, the Ammonites. Chemosh was probably the same as Molech. He is now to go forth into captivity with his priests and princes. On Jeremiah 48:10 critics say: "This bloodthirsty verse is surely not Jeremiah's." But they forget that the whole prophecy is introduced with, "Thus saith the LORD," and the critic's knife, which cuts out certain verses from this chapter, mutilates the Word of God. There is no valid reason to brand this and other verses as the work of some supplementer.

The chief places of Moab are mentioned. "The horn of Moab (horn the emblem of power) is cut off and his arm is broken, saith the LORD." And why this judgment? "For he has magnified himself against the LORD." They were filled

with pride, yea, they were exceedingly proud. The Lord speaks of it thus: “His loftiness and his arrogancy and his pride and his haughtiness of heart.” How God detests pride! In both Testaments it is marked out as the great abomination in the sight of God. Filled with pride and haughtiness, they derided Israel, God’s people; whenever Israel was mentioned “they skipped for joy” (verse 27). Of Jeremiah 48:28 and Jeremiah 48:29, critics declare that they are mostly derived from Isaiah 15:1-9; Isaiah 16:1-14. These two chapters contain a similar prophecy about Moab, but these utterances by Jeremiah are not copied from Isaiah, but are a divine repetition of the coming judgment of that people. “Woe be unto thee Moab! the people of Chemosh perisheth! for thy sons are taken captives, and thy daughters captive.” This is the final word in this predicted judgment of Moab. And thus Moab was broken.

The last verse speaks of a territorial restoration of Moab, not of a restitution of that wicked generation, as some teach. We do not know where a remnant of Moab is today, to possess in millennial times their former land; nor do we know how the Lord is going to accomplish it. But we know He will fulfill His own Word and we do not need to invent some scheme of how it will be done.

Chapter 49

49. Prophecy against various nations

Concerning Ammon, Edom, Damascus, Kedar, and Elam

*1. Concerning the Ammonites (*Jeremiah 49:1-6*)*

*2. Concerning Edom (*Jeremiah 49:7-22*)*

*3. Concerning Damascus (*Jeremiah 49:23-27*)*

*4. Concerning Kedar and Hazor (*Jeremiah 49:28-33*)*

*5. Against Elam (*Jeremiah 49:34-39*)*

Verses 1-6. Against Ammon

Ammon was the northern ‘brother’ nation of Moab (Genesis 19:30-38)

Verses 7-22. Against Edom

Obadiah 1-9 for another prophecy of Edom's punishment for cruelties inflicted and for encroachment on Judah's frontier due to Arab tribal expansion.

Verses 23-27. Against Damascus

Arpad in N. Syria, about 23 miles N of Aleppo, is commonly mentioned in Scripture with Hamath, a well-known city-state on the Orontes River N of Damascus. The power of these city-states was broken by Assyria and further reduced by Babylon.

Verses 28-33. Against Kedar and Hazor

Hazor (not Tell el Qedah, five miles SW of Lake Huleh, dominating the ancient trade route via Maris) is a still unknown place in the Arabian Desert E of Palestine which Nebuchadnezzar sacked in 598 B.C.

Verses 34-39. Against Elam

Elam, E of the Tigris-Euphrates county of Babylonia, with its capital at Susa, was overrun by Nebuchadnezzar in the winter of 596 B.C. Zedekiah ascended the throne in March , 597 BC., with the deposition of Jehoiachin.

Ammon was the younger brother of Moab, and, like the Moabites, the Ammonites were a wicked people, though they had no cities like Moab, but were restless wanderers; they were also the enemies of Israel. The predicted judgment has come. Where is Ammon today? In what tribe or nation is a remnant preserved? Only the Omniscient One knows. But their captivity, like that of Moab, will be brought back again in the days when Israel becomes the head of the nations.

Edom, springing from Esau, was the most outspoken enemy of Israel. In our annotations on the prophecy of Obadiah we return to this chapter. Their complete judgment is here announced. "For, lo, I will make thee small among the nations and despised among men. Thy terribleness has deceived thee and the pride of thine heart, O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, that holdest the height of the hill. Though thou shouldest make thy nest as high as the eagle, I will bring thee down from thence, saith the LORD" (Jeremiah 49:15-16). Here at least the critics concede that this is a true description of the dwelling places of Edom of old. "Its capital, Petra, lay in an amphitheater of mountains, accessible only through a narrow gorge, called the Sik, winding in with precipitous sides from the west; and the mountain sides round Petra, and the ravines about it,

contain innumerable rock-hewn cavities, some being tombs, but others dwellings in which the ancient inhabitants lived" (Canon Driver). No restoration for Edom is promised.

Damascus's anguish and sorrow is predicted next, followed by a prophecy concerning various Arabian tribes; Kedar and Hazor are to be smitten.

The final prediction is as to Elam. Elam was east of South Babylonia and the lower Tigris, later known as Susians. This prophecy was given at the beginning of Zedekiah's reign. Elam became an ally of the Persian kingdom. Here her overthrow is foretold as well as her restoration "in the latter days."

Chapters 50-51

50. Prophecy against Babylon

Verses 1-3. Fall to Persia

Verses 4-7. Return of the exiles

Verses 8-16. Fall of Babylon resumed

Verses 17-20. Israel's restoration

Verses 21-32. Divine judgment upon Babylon

Verses 33-34. Israel's deliverance repeated

Verses 35-46. Babylon's downfall repeated

51. Prophecy against Babylon continued

Verses 1-5. Divine judgment upon Babylon

Verses 6-10. Address to the remnant

Verses 11-19. Attack by the Medes

Verses 20-33. Babylon's utter ruin

Verses 34-40. Israel's deliverance

Verses 41-64. Babylon's fall continued

52. Fall and captivity of Judah; Jehoiachin's liberation

Verses 1-30. The fall of the city

Verses 31-34. Jehoiachin's liberation. See 2 Kings 25:27-30

Babylon

These two final chapters contain a great prophecy concerning Babylon, her overthrow and doom. The fifty-first chapter closes with the statement "thus far are the words of Jeremiah." There is a direct statement that Jeremiah wrote all these words. We find it at the close of Jeremiah 51:59-64. "Jeremiah wrote in a book all the evil that should come upon Babylon, even all these words that are written against Babylon." It would be a brazen infidelity which says Jeremiah did not write all these words. Yet the almost universally accepted view of the critics is that these chapters cannot be the work of Jeremiah. The German infidel, Professor Eichhorn, the man who coined the phrase "higher criticism," started this denial; Kuenen, Budde and others have followed in his steps. Others have modified this radical view and concede the possibility that Jeremiah may have been the author of these two chapters. No believer in the Word of God can have a moment's doubt as to this question.

An analysis of these two chapters would be difficult to make. We therefore point out some of the leading parts of this great utterance. The prophecy covers both the doom of Babylon as it has been and the doom of another, the mystical Babylon, so prominent in the last book of the Bible, in which also two chapters are devoted to Babylon. Some hold that the literal Babylon is meant in Revelation; that the city in Mesopotamia must be rebuilt; that it will finally become the one great world centre domineering the religious, commercial and political affairs of all the world, and that when this has taken place Jeremiah's prophecy will be fulfilled. A careful examination of this theory will show that it is untenable. It would mean that all the great world-centers of today must be wiped out first, and London, New York, and others would have to yield their supremacy to the restored Babylon. The chapters in Revelation show

us clearly that a Babylon of a mystical nature is meant, which in spirit, in worldly glory and corruption corresponds to the ancient Babylon. This mystical Babylon is Rome. This has been the interpretation of the chapters of Revelation from the earliest times and is still maintained, with a few exceptions, by all sound and spiritual expositors of the Word of God.

The message begins with the command to publish among the nations the conquest of Babylon, that Bel (lord) is put to shame and that Merodach (the

chief god of Babylon, known as Marduk in Babylonian inscriptions) is dismayed. The gods of Babylon are put to confusion on account of the fall of the city. The disaster comes from the north (Medo Persia, the conqueror of Babylon; Daniel 7:1-28). Jeremiah 50:4-7 predict the return of the nation thoroughly penitent. That the return of a small remnant after the defeat of Babylon does not exhaust this prophecy is obvious. The return promised here comes in the day when the times of the Gentiles are over, when Babylon and the Babylon spirit will pass away, when all false gods fall and the Lord is exalted in that day. Then the lost sheep of Israel will be found and gathered again.

The invasion under Cyrus is described in Jeremiah 50:9-10. The fall of the Babylon in Revelation is not brought about by an invasion such as is described here, but by the ten horns of the beast, the revived Roman empire Revelation 17:16; Daniel 7:1-28) .

Jeremiah 50:13 announces the complete overthrow of the city, to become the hindermost of the nations, a wilderness, a dry land and a desert. This ruin was not at once carried out, but gradually ancient Babylon became all that. The ruins of this once powerful city have been located north of Hilla, a town of about 25,000 inhabitants. Koldewey, of the German Orient Society, laid bare by excavation many of the ruins, showing that the city covered twelve square miles; great streets and canals, and the ruins of the Marduk temple have been found. These ruins can never be rebuilt Isaiah 47:1-15). There is nothing which indicates that this once glorious city is to have a revival and then be destroyed once more and remain a wilderness after its destruction at some future time.

In her fall Babylon only reaped what she had sown. “For it is the vengeance of the LORD take vengeance upon her; as she hath, do unto her” (Jeremiah 50:15). The same verdict is pronounced upon the Babylon of the end time, when Rome will once more have supremacy, when the present day Babylon-spirit will concentrate in a great world federation. “Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works; in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double” Revelation 18:66). The nations will then drink of the cup of God’s wrath and judgment as the literal Babylon did. Coupled with these judgment predictions are the future blessings of Israel. When the Lord overthrows the final Babylon, as seen in the book of Revelation, when the great whore is judged and her seat, Rome, in Italy, goes up in smoke, then Israel’s day of glory and blessing breaks. “In those days, and in that time, saith Jehovah, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found; for I will pardon them whom I leave as a remnant” (Jeremiah 50:20; see Jeremiah 31:34; Micah 7:18, and Romans 11:25-28). After still more predictions concerning the fall and doom of Babylon

(Jeremiah 50:21-32), we find another prophecy of comfort. When the times of the Gentiles end with the complete dethronement of Babylon in its mystical meaning as pictured in Revelation, the Redeemer of Israel will arise to plead the cause of His people Israel. The fiftieth chapter ends with an additional description of the desolation of Babylon.

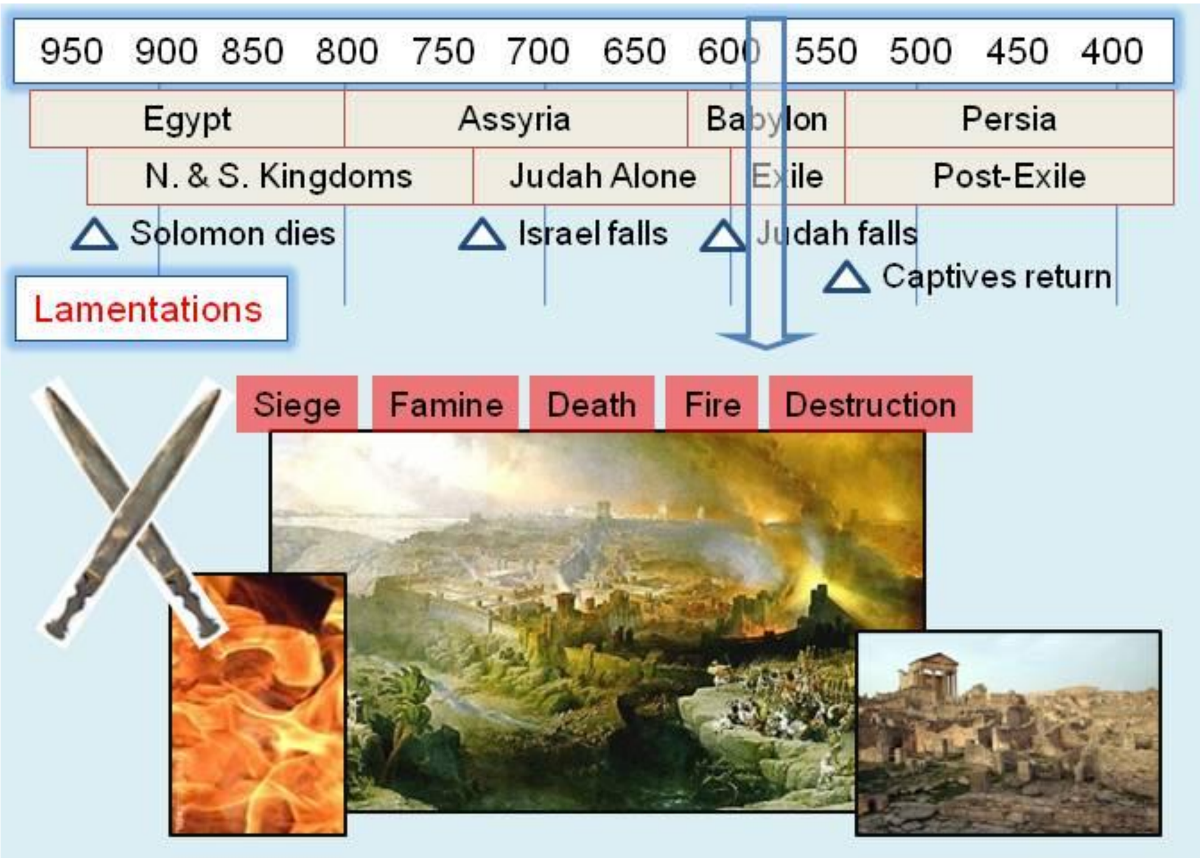
The fifty-first chapter is a continued prophecy of the doom and utter desolation of the proud mistress of the nations. Much here connects with Revelation 18:1-24. The remnant of Israel is addressed in Jeremiah 51:5 and Jeremiah 51:6. Compare with Revelation 18:4. It is the same command to flee Babylon, a principle which is in force today as regards the true church and her separation from ecclesiastical evil. The golden cup mentioned in Jeremiah 51:7 is also mentioned in Revelation in Revelation 17:4, in the description of papal Rome and her evil abominations. In the rest of the chapter God's dealing in judgment is wonderfully told out, prophetic of that coming day when the Lord will deal with the world in judgment. This must be the reason why such an extended prophecy is given. It all goes beyond the judgment of the literal Babylon. We call attention to the last verses of this long chapter. We read there that the prophet, after he wrote down all these words against Babylon, gave the book to Seraiah, chief chamberlain of Zedekiah. This was before the fall of Jerusalem. Seraiah was evidently the brother of Baruch (Jeremiah 32:12). While Jeremiah knew the significant position that Babylonia, and especially King Nebuchadnezzar, had been given by the sovereign Lord, on account of which he urged submission to the Chaldeans; he also knew even then, before Jerusalem fell, of Babylon's fall and doom. Seraiah went to Babylon and he was to read the roll there, probably not in public, but in private. After reading, he was to speak certain words (Jeremiah 51:62), then bind a stone to the roll and cast it into the Euphrates. When the roll was sinking he was to say, "Thus shall Babylon sink and shall not rise again." In our New Testament book of prophecy we read: "And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more" Revelation 18:21. That great predicted end of all God-defiance and opposition, typified by Babylon and its past glory, will surely come. Jeremiah uttered his last word.

The last chapter of Jeremiah is not from his pen; some other inspired writer was moved by the Holy Spirit to add the history of the capture of Jerusalem and the fate of the people.

The substance of this appendix is found in 2 Kings 24:18-20; 2 Kings 25:1-30; 2 Kings 25:27-30. The reader will find in the second book of Kings our annotations on this history. But why is it added here once more? Evidently to

show how literally the judgment predictions and divine warnings given through Jeremiah were fulfilled. For a time the false prophets had their way; their lying messages, their words of delusion and false hope were listened to and believed. The lot of the prophet of God was a lonely lot; he was rejected and he suffered. Yea, often the weeping prophet was discouraged and filled with gloom. But the time came when he was vindicated and God's Word was vindicated, while the false prophets were found out to be liars and deceivers.

In our own day we have the false prophets still with us, men and women, who deny the truth and teach error. They speak of world improvement, world betterment, and world conquest. What God has spoken concerning "wrath and judgment to come" is set aside. Those who preach and teach according to the infallible Word of God, who see no better world, no universal righteousness and peace, are branded as pessimists. The "day of the LORD" and the "coming of the Lord" are sneered at. But as the Word of God spoken by Jeremiah was vindicated, so the Word of God will be vindicated again, till all the enemies of the written Word, the Bible, and the living Word, Christ, are silenced forever.



A Survey on the Book Lamentations

Historical Background of the Book Lamentations. Around 598 B.C., the Babylonians installed Zedekiah as king over Judah. While Daniel was in Babylon as a government official and Ezekiel was a captive, Jeremiah continued to prophesy in Judah. After about 10 years, Zedekiah rebelled which resulted in the third invasion of Judah by Babylon and an 18 month siege of Jerusalem, causing a severe famine within the city. The city's protective wall was finally breached and the city was destroyed in 586 B.C. (2 Kings 25; Jeremiah 39, 52). The Babylonian army slaughtered many of the remaining inhabitants and took some back to Babylon, burned all the major buildings including the temple, and carried the valuables back to Babylon (see Dan.5 for the vessels being used at Belshazzar's drunken feast). The city was turned into a smouldering ruin.

The Author and the Audience. The author of Lamentations is not specified, although it is traditionally attributed to Jeremiah. The audience is also not specified, although part of the book is addressed to God. The literary style of the book is somewhat unique. Chapters 1 through 4 are written as acrostic poetry (like Psalms 119) where each line uses a word that begins with a sequential letter from the 22 letter Hebrew alphabet.

Outline/Major Themes. The book of Lamentations consists primarily of laments, expressions of deep grief over the fate of Jerusalem and her people. If Jeremiah is the author, such is not surprising given his 40 year dedication of warning the people to repent.

Ch. 1 Jerusalem's fate, misery, and desolation
Ch. 2 As judgment from a righteous God in anger against His sinful people
Ch. 3 Pleas for the Lord's mercies
Ch. 4 Remembrance of how Jerusalem once was
Ch. 5 Repentance and prayer for forgiveness and deliverance

Messages for Christians. Lamentations reminds us of several important lessons:

Prov. 14:34 "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any nation."
The coming judgment of a righteous God - Psalms 19:7-9; Rom. 2:1-10; Rev. 16:4-7; 19:2.
God's compassion and mercy - Lam. 3:22-25; Eph. 2:1-10 (esp. verses 4-5); 1 Peter 1:3-4; 2:9-10.

The Book of Lamentations

Introduction

The Book of Lamentations consists of five beautifully written poems to lament the destruction of Jerusalem and the suffering of its people, in 587 BCE, and accept guilt because God had ordained this to happen as punishment for sin. The first four poems are acrostics in which the separate stanzas begin with successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet from the first to the last. The first, second, fourth and fifth contain 22 verses, the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet, while the third has 66 verses.

Through all this, the author continues to worship God, who is seen as punishing his people deservedly. Chapter 5, the fifth poem, ends with the words of contrition and hope (5:19:22): "You, O Lord, are enthroned forever; your throne stands from age to age. Why, then, should you forget us, abandon us so long a time? Lead us back to you, O LORD, that we may be restored: give us anew such days as we had of old. For now you have indeed rejected us, and in full measure turned your wrath against us."

Chapter 1 explains Jerusalem's misery and desolation. Verse 1:1 portrays defeated Jerusalem as a lonely widow and a toiling slave. Verse 1:17 graphically describes Zion (Jerusalem) stretching out her hands, but there is no one to console her. Verse 1:19 "I cried out to my lovers, but they failed me ..." reminds us that Judah had formed alliances with her powerful neighbours (her 'lovers'), but when the need was desperate they were unable to help.

Chapter 2 tells of God's anger against the people of Jerusalem - the word 'anger' or 'wrath' occurs eight times. It is also the only poem that mentions 'Israel', doing so three times. "Daughter of Judah" is mentioned twice. Zion is mentioned seven times, six of these as "daughter of Zion," and "daughter of Jerusalem" is mentioned two times. Chapter 1 is the only other poem that personifies Zion (once) and Judah (once) with the word daughter.

Chapter 3 is written very much from the perspective of a grieving man, although we do not know whether he is a specific person or whether he represents all the men of Judah. Although God has punished him and continues to punish him, the man feels no bitterness towards the Lord. Robin A. Parry ('Lamentations', page 92) sees this chapter as central to understanding the book as a whole.

The immediacy of suffering suggests that the poem in chapter 4 could have been written shortly after the defeat, but the hope expressed in 4:22 points to much

later authorship. On the other hand, in verse 4:22 there is hope that the chastisement is finished, and that now Edom will be punished because its people assisted the Babylonian conquest and took advantage of the absence of the Jews from southern Judah.

Chapter 5 contains the only poem in Lamentations that is addressed to the Lord, and can be read as begging that the people will soon be forgiven. Verse 5:6 recalls the short-term alliances that Judah had formed with Egypt and Assyria, as if accepting that God's people should not accept help from foreigners. Verse 5:7 accepts guilt for the sins of their forefathers. In this poem, the ruin of Jerusalem seems further in the past, while the author portrays the suffering of exile.

Author: The Book of Lamentations does not explicitly identify its author. The tradition is that the Prophet Jeremiah wrote Lamentations. This view is highly likely considering the author was a witness of the Babylonians destroying Jerusalem. Jeremiah fits this qualification (2 Chronicles 35:25; 36:21-22).

Date of Writing: The Book of Lamentations was likely written between 586 and 575 B.C., during or soon after Jerusalem’s fall.

Purpose of Writing: As a result of Judah’s continued and unrepentant idolatry, God allowed the Babylonians to besiege, plunder, burn, and destroy the city of Jerusalem. Solomon’s Temple, which had stood for approximately 400 years, was burned to the ground. The Prophet Jeremiah, an eyewitness to these events, wrote the Book of Lamentations as a lament for what occurred to Judah and Jerusalem.

Key Verses: Lamentations 2:17, “The LORD has done what he planned; he has fulfilled his word, which he decreed long ago. He has overthrown you without pity, he has let the enemy gloat over you, he has exalted the horn of your foes.”

Lamentations 3:22-23, “Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.”

Lamentations 5:19-22, “You, O LORD, reign forever; your throne endures from generation to generation. Why do you always forget us? Why do you forsake us so long? Restore us to yourself, O LORD, that we may return; renew our days as of old unless you have utterly rejected us and are angry with us beyond measure.”

Brief Summary: The Book of Lamentations is divided into five chapters. Each

chapter represents a separate poem. In the original Hebrew, the verses are acrostic, each verse starting with a succeeding letter of the Hebrew alphabet. In the Book of Lamentations, the Prophet Jeremiah understands that the Babylonians were God's tool for bringing judgment on Jerusalem (Lamentations 1:12-15; 2:1-8; 4:11). Lamentations makes it clear that sin and rebellion were the causes of God's wrath being poured out (1:8-9; 4:13; 5:16). Lamenting is appropriate in a time of distress, but it should quickly give way to contrition and repentance (Lamentations 3:40-42; 5:21-22).

Predictions: Jeremiah was known as the "weeping prophet" for his deep and abiding passion for his people and their city (Lamentations 3:48-49). This same sorrow over the sins of the people and their rejection of God was expressed by Jesus as He approached Jerusalem and looked ahead to her destruction at the hands of the Romans (Luke 19:41-44). Because of the Jews' rejection of their Messiah, God used the Roman siege to punish His people. But God takes no joy in having to punish His children and His offer of Jesus Christ as a provision for sin shows His great compassion on His people. One day, because of Christ, God will wipe away all tears (Revelation 7:17).

Practical Lessons: Even in terrible judgment, God is a God of hope (Lamentations 3:24-25). No matter how far we have gone from Him, we have the hope that we can return to Him and find Him compassionate and forgiving (1 John 1:9). Our God is a loving God (Lamentations 3:22), and because of His great love and compassion, He sent His Son so that we would not perish in our sins, but can live eternally with Him (John 3:16). God's faithfulness (Lamentations 3:23) and deliverance (Lamentations 3:26) are attributes that give us great hope and comfort. He is not a disinterested, capricious god, but a God who will deliver all those who turn to Him, admit they can do nothing to earn His favour, and call upon the Lord's mercy so that we will not be consumed (Lamentations 3:22).

Notes on the Prophecy of the Lamentations and Jeremiah Chapters 32-33, imprisoned for the testimony of God

All the fervid appeals of the prophet had been apparently wasted on Zedekiah. His heart was bent on departure from God. For over nine years, however, we hear of no positive act of persecution on his part. It is rather the other way. The records indicate that he stood in awe of the solemn and terrible denouncer of his iniquitous ways. His conscience would be, like Herod's, on the accuser's side.

In this tenth year of his reign he was in great straits, owing to the fact that the army of the king of Babylon had invested Jerusalem. In his distress he turned not to the Lord, but brazenly steeled his heart against His words. Jeremiah,

particularly, was as a thorn in his side. He determined to silence him. Accordingly he commanded his apprehension, and the prophet was soon placed under arrest and shut up in the court of the prison, which adjoined the royal palace. The ostensible reason given was that by his words he weakened the hands of the people of Jerusalem by declaring that the defense would be in vain; the Lord having assured him that the city was to fall into the hands of the besiegers. Of Zedekiah, too, he had prophesied only evil.

He should not escape, but be certainly delivered into the power of Nebuchadrezzar and led to Babylon as a captive (vers. 1-5). All this was a most unwelcome message for the self-willed king. Having no thought to humble himself, he concluded to silence the seer rather than bow to his message. It has been the common resource of men in all ages, who being set upon their own ways are angered when coming judgment is proclaimed.

> *In the prison Jeremiah is instructed by the Lord to make what to many would have seemed amost unwise investment.*

His cousin Hanameel, the son of his uncle Shallum, had a field in Anathoth, which he, doubtless pressed by the troubles of the times, was desirous of realizing some money upon. A purchaser would be hard to find, but he is instructed to go direct to the very man who had prophesied the captivity of the people, to whom he offers to sell it, as the "**right of redemption**" was Jeremiah's; that is, according to the law he was *the Gael, or kinsman-redeemer*.

By his purchasing the field, it would not pass from the house of his fathers. Hanameel accordingly went to the court of the prison, there to find his cousin in durance vile. The Lord had already apprised Jeremiah of his purpose.

> "Buy my field, I pray thee, that is in Anathoth, which is in the country of Benjamin," he said: "for the right of inheritance is thine, and the redemption is thine; buy it for thyself" (verse 8).

Assured that it was from the Lord, the prophet unhesitatingly bought the property in question, paying for it seventeen shekels of silver. The deed was accordingly made out transferring the property to him, properly attested by witnesses, all in due order as required by the law and custom of the time. The title-deeds seem to have been contained in two rolls. One was open and the other sealed. The open one would probably, under ordinary circumstances, be placed on file in the official archives; the sealed one was to be safely stored away until the seventy years' servitude had come to a close, when it would be of value in determining the portion of Jeremiah's heirs. It was delivered to Baruch, of

whom we now hear for the first time, but who was evidently the prophet's amanuensis, and a faithful man. He was instructed to:

> "Take these evidences, this evidence of the purchase, both which is sealed, and this evidence which is open; and put them in an earthen vessel, that they may continue many days. For thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land" (verses 9-15).

The purchase is thus seen to be a distinct act of faith on Jeremiah's part. God had informed him of the sure return from Babylon of the remnant of the people, upon the expiration of the seventy years. He implicitly believed that word, and therefore bought what seemed to be a piece of ground now worthless, in the possession of which neither he nor his heirs could enter.

At the appointed time the sealed title-deeds would put the rightful owner into possession of the field. No thoughtful Bible student can fail to see in this striking incident the key to the understanding of the vision of the seven-sealed book in the Revelation. The latter is unquestionably the title deed to this world. It remains sealed till the rightful Heir steps forth to claim it. He, the worthy One, has first to purge His heritage by judgment, before entering into possession of it.

The opening of the seals is the declaration that He is about to enter into His vested rights. Returning to our chapter, we have, from the 16th verse to the 25th, Jeremiah's prayer upon the signing of the deeds, followed (from verse 26 to the end) with the Lord's reiteration of the promise that the land shall yet be inhabited by Israel and fields again bought therein.

In his prayer the prophet acknowledges the power, as also the loving-kindness, of the Lord, and owns the righteousness of His judgment upon His people because of their sins.

> "Ah, Lord God!" *He prays*, "behold, Thou hast made the heaven and the earth by Thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for Thee" (verse 17).

This is the ground of his confidence. He reposes upon the Word of the Omnipotent God.

> "Thou showest loving-kindness unto thousands, and recompensest the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them: the Great, the Mighty God, the Lord of hosts, is His name, great in counsel

and mighty in work: for Thine eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men, to give everyone according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings" (verses 18, 19).

He is owned as the Moral Governor of the universe, who deals with all according to their works. Nothing is too small for His notice, or too great for His capacity.

"All things are naked and open before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do."

His eyes run to and fro throughout the whole earth to render to all men according to the fruit of their doings. He shows Himself strong in behalf of those who seek to honour Him; while, to such as lightly esteem Him, He appears as an enemy.

Not that He ever is such - "His mercy endureth forever" - *but from the wicked He hides His face.*

Jeremiah goes back to the nation's beginning in Egypt, owning the grace that dealt with them in giving deliverance from the cruel oppressor and in bringing them into the land of promise. All He had undertaken had been abundantly fulfilled, but they obeyed Him not; therefore "all this evil" had come upon them (vers. 20-23). Now the Chaldeans surrounded the beloved city, while famine and pestilence raged within.

"What Thou hast spoken is come to pass; and, behold,Thou seest it" (ver. 24). Yet the Lord had said, "Buy the field for money, and take witnesses;" even though the city was given into the hand of the Chaldeans (verse 25).

Here he breaks off abruptly, and at once the Lord answers him by delineating more fully the sin of Israel and Judah, but in assuring him also of the everlasting nature of His covenant with them.

He declares, in verse 27, that He is the God of all flesh, and asks,

"**Is there anything too hard for Me?**"

Taking up the expression Jeremiah had used in the beginning of his prayer. Precious it is to have to do with One to whom nothing is impossible. What comfort for His imprisoned servant to know that it was the Almighty upon whom he leaned!

Into the hand of the Chaldeans the city shall surely be given, He goes on to say; and Nebuchadrezzar shall take it, destroying the houses and roofs where incense was offered to Baal, and drink offerings were poured out unto other gods.

From their youth the course of Israel and Judah had been only evil. Jerusalem had been to Him "**as a provocation**" of His anger "from the day they built it unto this day;" therefore it should be razed to the ground (versions 28-31). Kings, princes, priests, prophets, and the commonalty of Judah and Jerusalem, had all been of one heart to do evil in His sight. They had turned their backs upon Him; and though He gave them instructors who would fain have recovered them to Himself, they had refused to heed their messages. Even in His own house they had set up their abominable idols, thus defiling its sacred precincts, while unmentionable idolatrous practices (of which He could say, "which I commanded them not, neither came it into My mind") had they perpetrated (verses 32-36).

> Therefore there was no remedy; He would give them up until His chastisement had yielded "the peaceable fruit of righteousness." In that day He will "give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear [Him] forever, for the good of them, and of their children after them" (verses 37-39).

When, in true repentance, they turned back to Himself, He would "make an everlasting covenant with them," and never more turn away from them, but would put His fear in their hearts, that they should not depart from Him (ver. 40). With His "whole heart and soul" He will rejoice over them to do them good. How touchingly human the language used! (verse 41).

All the evil prophesied had been and should be fulfilled to the letter. In like manner will He literally carry out all His promises for good. No word of His can by any means fail of accomplishment. Israel restored and the land once more inhabited in peace and safety,

> "Men shall buy fields for money, and subscribe evidences, and seal them, and take witnesses in the land of Benjamin, and in the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, and in the cities of the mountains, and in the cities of the valley, and in the cities of the south" (verses 42-44).

The thirty-third chapter consists of two distinct prophecies, but we group them with the preceding because all alike were given during the time that Jeremiah was shut up in the court of the prison. His body might be in confinement, but

none could hinder the communication of divine messages to the soul of the man of God. The first section includes verses 1 to 18. Like the foregoing, it concerns the restoration to the land, but in no sense limiting it to the return at the expiration of the seventy years in Babylon.

> "Great and mighty things"

God is about to show to His servant. He who, for their sins, has permitted the overthrow of Jerusalem, having hidden His face from it, will assuredly bring it health and cure, revealing unto them "the abundance of peace and truth." He will cause the captivity of both Israel and Judah to return, and give them to know His pardoning grace, cleansing them from all their transgressions (verses 1-8).

Jerusalem is destined yet to become a "name of joy, a praise, and an honor before all the nations of the earth," for the fame of His lovingkindness towards it shall go out into all the world. In place of the desolation which it must for a time know, its streets shall once more be filled with a joyous, God-fearing multitude who shall chant the praise of their covenant-keeping God (verses 9-11).

In the country round about shepherds shall once more pasture their flocks with none to make them afraid, when the cities shall be rebuilt and the waste places inhabited, in the day that the Lord will perform all His promises of blessing (verses 12-14).

At that time the veil that for centuries has covered their hearts will be removed; the lowly Nazarene, once rejected as an impostor, will reappear in glory, to be accepted of all the people as the Anointed of the Lord.

> "In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of Righteousness to grow up unto David; and He shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, the Lord our Righteousness," verses 15, 16).

We have already noticed that in chap. 22:6 it is He who is called by this significant name. Here it is applied to her - that is, to restored Jerusalem. His righteousness shall be put upon her; and clothed in the garments of salvation she shall rejoice beneath Immanuel's sway. The promise made to David shall be fulfilled: he "**shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel**," and the priesthood likewise shall be established (verses 17, 18).

The second section is composed of the balance of the chapter-verse 19 to 26, inclusive. It resembles the affirmation of chap. 31:35-37, but is even fuller. If the covenant of the day and of the night can be broken, then may His covenant with David be annulled; but as truly as the stars of heaven cannot be numbered, nor the sand of the sea measured, so will He multiply the seed of David and of the Levites that minister unto Him (verses 19-22).

In their unbelief they had charged Him with violating His pledge and casting off the two families (Israel and Judah) which He had chosen; and the reference in their complaint is probably to the Chaldeans: “They have despised My people, that they should be no more a nation before them” (verses 23, 24).

Their reasoning is utterly at fault. It is because they are His people that He “will punish them for their iniquity.” Though they pass under the rod, He will not utterly give them up. If His covenant be not with day and night, and if He have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth, then He will cast away the seed of Jacob and of David; otherwise He will certainly “cause their captivity to return, and have mercy on them” (verses 25, 26). Soon, perhaps in the lifetime of many now upon earth, will He cause these promises to be fulfilled?

Commentary on the Book of Lamentations

by

Arno Clement Gaebelein

1861-1942

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Introduction

In the Hebrew Bible, the small book which follows in our English Bible the book of Jeremiah, is placed in the portion which is called "Kethubim" (the writings). It is one of the five, so-called "Megilloth." The Septuagint translation begins with a brief paragraph which is not found in our version: "It came to pass that, after Israel was taken captive and Jerusalem was made desolate, Jeremiah sat weeping and lamented with this lamentation over Jerusalem, and said ...;" then the first chapter begins. The Vulgate (Latin) translation has adopted this statement and also the Arabic version.

There can be no question that Jeremiah is the inspired author of these outbursts of grief, as well as confession of sin and dependence on Jehovah. Yet this has

not only been seriously questioned, but positively denied. Critics claim that probably chapters 2 and 4 must have been written by an eye-witness of Judah's conquest; they deny that it was Jeremiah and think it must have been one of the exiles. The claim is made because it appears to them that these two chapters lean strongly on Ezekiel and parts, they say, must have been copied after Ezekiel's writings. The other chapters, they say, are much later. Critics like Budde and Cheyne put the third chapter in the pre-Maccabean period towards the end of the third century. All is nothing but guesswork, which is proved by the different theories of these scholars, which clash with each other. To show the superficial method of these men we shall give a few of the star arguments against the Jeremianic authorship of Lamentations. They say that 4:17 could hardly have been written by Jeremiah because the writer includes himself with those who had expected help from Egypt. But the critic does not see that the prophet identifies himself with the nation, as Daniel did. Then again, they object to 4:20, because it speaks of Zedekiah in such a way as Jeremiah would never have spoken of him. But how do they know? Zedekiah was still the Lord's anointed, even as David recognized down to the sad end of Saul, the king as the Lord's anointed. Instead of being an argument against the authorship of Jeremiah, it is one for it.

Then these "literary" critics claim that the smooth and beautiful style cannot be Jeremiah's. "The whole style of these poems, though exquisitely beautiful and touching, and studded with the thoughts of the great prophet, is absolutely different to anything we find in the long roll of Jeremiah's great work. It is too artificial, too much studied, too elaborately worked out" (A.B. Davidson). If A.B. Davidson and other critics had just a little faith in divine inspiration they would not write such puerile criticism. As if the Spirit of God could not change the style and manner of the writings of one of His chosen instruments!

The Lamentations are correctly divided into five chapters in a very remarkable way. Chapters 1 and 2 consist each of twenty-two verses of three lines each. All is written in a certain meter. Each verse begins in both chapters with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet. They are acrostics. The third chapter has instead of 22 verses, 66 verses, that is 3 x 22. The first three verses of this chapter begin each with the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet; the next three with the second letter, so that in these 66 verses the Hebrew alphabet is again followed. The fourth chapter is also arranged in the same manner, acrostically, each of the 22 verses begin with the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. The last chapter shows no such arrangement. We doubt not that in all this there may be a hidden, a deeper meaning, which no saint of God has yet discovered.

The message of this book is extremely precious. It is a pity that so few of God's people have ever paid a closer attention to this book. Here is indeed a great mine of comfort and spiritual instruction which will prove very wholesome to all those who walk with God.

When Israel suffered in Egypt the Lord said: "I have surely seen the affliction of My people" (Exodus 3:7). Lamentations shows the same blessed fact, that Jehovah has a loving and deep interest in the afflictions of His people through which they pass on account of their sins. He who had to chastise His people is nevertheless moved with compassion in their behalf. Yea, in their affliction He Himself is afflicted and He yearns over them. The feelings, deep emotions of sorrow and humiliation, expressed by the mouthpiece of Jehovah, Jeremiah, were produced by the Spirit of Christ, in the heart of the prophet.

"There is nothing more affecting than the sentiments produced in the heart by the conviction that the subject of affliction is beloved of God, that He loves that which He is obliged to smite, and is obliged to smite that which He loves. The prophet, while laying open the affliction of Jerusalem, acknowledges that the sin of the people had caused it. Could that diminish the sorrow of his heart? If on the one hand it was a consolation, on the other it humbled and made him hide his face. The pride of the enemy, and their joy in seeing the affliction of the beloved of God, give occasion to sue for compassion on behalf of the afflicted, and judgment on the malice of the enemy" (Synopsis of the Bible).

Prophetically we may look upon these lamentations as embodying the soul-exercise of the godly remnant of God's earthly people passing in a future day through the great tribulation. That beautiful prayer found in the last chapter will then be answered, "renew our days of old" and all the glorious promises given to Israel will then be fulfilled. No further division of this book is needed; the division into five chapters is perfect.

Chapter 1

1. Desolated Jerusalem cries for pity

Jerusalem's Great Desolation and the Sorrow of His People

The chapter begins with an outburst of grief over Jerusalem's desolation. Once she was a populous city; now she is solitary. Once she was great among the nations, like a princess among provinces, and now she is widowed. Then in the next verse we hear her weeping; she weeps all night long; none is there to comfort her; her friends have turned against her, they have become her enemies.

She was disobedient to her Lord, she rejected His Word, she gave up her holy place as His separated people and now "she findeth no rest." The Lord's hand is upon her for the multitude of her transgressions. The hopeful note we find in verses 8-11. Here is confession of her guilt and shame; here is humiliation and appeal to the Lord on account of the enemy. "See, O LORD, and behold; for I am become vile." Such humiliation and self-judgment is pleasing in the Lord's sight.

Verses 1-11. Her desolation is described

Verses 12-22. The personified city bewails her destruction

In verse 12 Jerusalem speaks: "is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the LORD hath afflicted me in the day of His fierce anger." The passer-by who beholds the ruins of Zion is asked to look upon the desolations and then to consider that the Lord in His righteous anger smote her, who is still His beloved. Well may we think of Him, who had to say, "See if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow," who was smitten and afflicted, upon whom Jehovah's rod rested, over whose blessed head all the waves and billows of Divine judgment-wrath rolled, He who is the Beloved, the Son of God, our Lord. Again the prophet breaks out in weeping, "His eye runneth down with water." He is deeply affected over the desolation and judgment which has taken place. But a greater One, greater than Jeremiah, stood centuries after before the same city, brought back from the ruin of Jeremiah's time. And as He beheld that city He wept, because His omniscient eye beheld a still more appalling judgment for city and nation.

Forsaken, uncomforted, distressed, humiliated, sighing and crying, owning her rebellion, vindicating Jehovah and His righteousness, Jerusalem sits in the dust, "abroad the sword bereaveth, at home there is death."

Chapter 2

2. The Lord’s chastening and its results

What the Lord Has Done!

Verses 1-8. The Lord’s punishment of the city

Verses 9-17. The results of the Lord’s punishment

Verses 18-19. The prophet's exhortation to true repentance

Verses 20-22. His prayer as identified with the chastened people

The great catastrophe continues in vivid description throughout this chapter also. Not an enemy has done it, not Nebuchadrezzar and his Chaldean hordes, but the Lord is the executor of all. The beauty of Israel He cast down; He swallowed up the habitations of Jacob; He burned against Jacob like a flame; He bent His bow like an enemy; He poured out His fury like fire; He was as an enemy. These are a few of the many expressions with which the righteousness of the Lord in judging His people is acknowledged.

And what a great description of Jerusalem and her inhabitants we read in verses 8-16. Gates broken down; king and princes among the Gentiles; law abandoned; no more visions! Elders on the ground in sackcloth and ashes; virgins hanging their heads; children and sucklings swooning in the streets--and all that pass by clap their hands, hiss, and wag their head at the daughter of Jerusalem.

"The LORD hath done what He had devised; He hath fulfilled the Word that He had commanded in the days of old." Oh! that the people today would hear and believe that God will yet fulfill other judgment messages ,and deal with the world on account of its sin. The chapter ends with a prayer.

Chapter 3

3. Heart cry of a chastened people

The Prophet's Suffering and Distress

Verses 1-24. A psalm of personal faith in God

Verses 25-51. Jeremiah enjoins repentance and submission to God

Verses 52-66. Prayer for vindication against the enemy

This chapter is intensely personal. None but Jeremiah could have written these wonderful expressions of sorrow, the sorrows of the people of God into which he entered so fully, in such a way that they become his own. He shared all their afflictions, bore them himself and then was hated by them. It was the Spirit of Christ who created these feelings in the heart of the prophet. In reading these words of deep distress and the words of faith and waiting for Him, we must look beyond Jeremiah and see a picture of our Lord, "the Man of sorrows and

acquainted with grief," His sorrow and His afflictions, the emotions of His holy soul, as well as the experiences and soul exercise of the believing remnant of Israel in days to come.

The prophet speaks of himself as one who is smitten by the rod of God's wrath, the man that hath seen affliction. He had not deserved that wrath; the wrath and affliction have come upon a sinful people, but he identifies himself with them. What must have been the suffering and the affliction of our Lord when He, at the close of His blessed life, suffered and died the death of the cross! The rod of righteousness fell on Him. More than Jeremiah did, He tasted that wrath, when He who knew no sin was made sin for us. "He (God) hath bent His bow, and set me as a mark for the arrow. He hath caused the arrows of His quiver to enter into my reins. I was a derision to all my people and their song all the day" (verses 12-14). He speaks of "the wormwood and the gall" (verse 19); of the "smitten cheek filled with reproach" (verse 30).

Through such suffering Jeremiah passed as well as the godly of all ages, as well as those in the future. Jeremiah's affliction but faintly foreshadows the afflictions of the Afflicted One. But while Jeremiah suffered with Jerusalem and for Jerusalem, he was not destitute of comfort. He knew the Lord and He sustained him in his affliction. How beautifully he speaks of the mercies of the Lord, of His compassions which never fail, of the greatness of His faithfulness (verses 22, 23).

Such is the comfort still of all those who know the Lord; it is the song in the night: "The LORD is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in Him. The LORD is good unto them that wait for Him, to the soul that seeketh Him." All His saints speak thus when they feel the chastening hand of the Lord. He has full confidence in the Lord and knows "He doth not afflict willingly," and that "the LORD will not cast off for ever." And again, "though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies."

Beginning with verse 40, a real return is described. There is self-examination: "Let us search and try our ways and turn again to the LORD." This is followed by prayer: "Let us lift up our hearts with our hands unto God in the heavens." Then comes confession: "We have transgressed and have rebelled; Thou hast not pardoned." It describes prophetically the repentance of a Jewish remnant when this present age ends and the Lord is about to be manifested in visible glory. Jeremiah's lament over Jerusalem's condition and the nation's state is once more recorded in verses 45-47. "Thou hast made us an off scouring and refuse in the midst of the people. All our enemies have opened their mouths against us. Fear and snare is come upon us, desolation and destruction."

Such will also be the complaint of the suffering remnant. This chapter ends with an imprecatory prayer. "Render unto them a recompense, O LORD, according to the works of their hands. Give them sorrow of heart, thy curse unto them. Persecute and destroy them in anger from under the heavens of the LORD." It is like the imprecatory prayers in the Psalms, prayers which will be prayed when the godly in Israel suffer under their enemies in the great tribulation.

Chapter 4

4. Horrors of the siege and fall of the city

The Departed Glory and the Cup of Shame

Verses 1-20. Jerusalem’s disaster described

Verses 21-22. Prediction on disaster on Edom

This new lament begins with a description of the former glory of Zion and its present wretchedness; the glory is departed:

> How is the gold become dim!
> The most pure gold changed!
> The stones of the sanctuary are poured forth
> at the top of every street.
> The precious sons of Zion,
> just like fine gold--
> How are they now esteemed like earthen pitchers:
> the work of the potters' hands!
> Even the jackals draw out the breast,
> giving suck to their young--
> The daughter of my people is become cruel,
> like the ostriches in the wilderness.
> The tongue of the sucking child cleaveth
> to the roof of his mouth for thirst.
> The young children ask bread,
> no man breaketh it unto them.
> They that did feel delicately
> are desolate in the streets.
> They that were brought up in scarlet
> embrace dung hills.

What degradation and shame! The Lord had called Zion to be like the pure gold, precious and glorious. In his beautiful parable, Ezekiel speaks thus of Jerusalem's glory: "Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver; and thy raiment was of fine linen and silk and broidered work, thou didst eat fine flour, and honey, and oil; and thou wast exceeding beautiful, and thou didst prosper in a kingdom" (Ezekiel 16:13). The gold is become dim, the pure gold changed. Instead of the linen and silk there is sackcloth and ashes; instead of the flour, the honey, and the oil, there is want and famine. When the golden-glory departed from Zion, then the Lord revealed that Nebuchadnezzar is "the head of gold," the starting point of the times of the Gentiles. The glory had departed and Zion had to drink of shame and want to the full on account of her sins (verse 6). And what a contrast now between what the Nazarites and nobles of the nation were once and what they are now. They were purer than snow, whiter than milk, and now they are blacker than coal. They were ruddy in body; and now their skin cleaveth to their bones. What a horrible transformation sin had wrought! Sin is a robber; sin brings its wages.

It robs of glory and gives nothing but suffering, shame and death. All that God had spoken long ago, the very curses generation after generation had read in the book of the law (Deut. 28:56, 57; Lev. 26:29), had come upon them. The kings of the earth, the inhabitants of the world, knew that Jerusalem was unconquerable, for the Lord of all the earth was Zion's King and Lord. What no earthly power could have done, to enter Jerusalem and spoil the city, the Lord had done, "on account of the sins of her prophets, the iniquities of her priests, that have shed the blood of the just in the midst of her." Jerusalem was built again. Once more after the seventy years the city was restored, the temple rebuilt. Then the just One came, the Messiah of David, the Lord of Glory. They shed the blood of the just One, and now, as verse 14 says, "They wander about blind."

And Edom! She had rejoiced at Zion's overthrow, even as Gentiles have despised Israel. But there is judgment in store for the nations, mercy for Israel, when the punishment is accomplished. "He will no more carry thee away into captivity."

Chapter 5

5. Lament and petition for restoration

The Prayer of Hope

Verses 1-18. Lament over Judah's misery under Babylon's heel

Verses 19-22. Intercession for divine mercy

The lamentations end with a prayer: "Remember, O LORD, what is come upon us; consider and behold our reproach." It is the prayer of confession and of hope, which reaches the heart of the God of Israel. The prophet, in behalf of the nation, pours out his confession: "The crown is fallen from our head; woe unto us that we have sinned." And there is hope in the Lord who remaineth, whose throne is from generation to generation. The prayer, "Turn Thou us unto Thee, O LORD, and we shall be turned; renew our days as of old." (verse 21) will some day be blessedly answered. The Eightieth Psalm contains the same prayer a number of times, and there He is mentioned who will yet save His people Israel from their sins. "Let Thy hand be upon the Man of Thy right hand, upon the Son of Man whom Thou madest strong for Thyself. So will not we go back from Thee; quicken us and we will call on Thy Name. Turn us again O LORD God of hosts, cause Thy face to shine, and we shall be saved."

"The prophet now presents in this chapter the whole affliction of the people to God, as an object of compassion and mercy. This is an onward step in the path of these deep exercises of heart. He is at peace with God; he is in His presence; it is no longer a heart struggling with inward misery. All is confessed before Jehovah, who is faithful to His people, so that he can call on God to consider the affliction in order that He may remember His suffering people according to the greatness of His compassions. For Jehovah changes not (5:19-21). The sense of the affliction remains in full, but God is brought in, and everything having been recalled and judged before Him, all that had happened being cleared up to the heart, Jeremiah can rest in the proper and eternal relations between God and His beloved people; and, shutting himself into his direct relations with his God, he avails himself of His goodness, as being in those relations, to find in the affliction of the beloved people an opportunity for calling His attention to them. This is the true position of faith--that which it attains as the result of its exercises before God at the sight of the affliction of His people (an affliction so much the deeper from its being caused by sin).

"This book of Lamentations is remarkable because we see in it the expression of the thoughts of the Spirit of God, that is, those produced in persons under His influence, the vessels of His testimony, when God was forced to set aside that which He had established in the world as His own. There is nothing similar in the whole circle of the revelations and of the affections of God. He says himself, How could He treat them as Admah and Zeboim? Christ went through it in its fullest extent. But He went through it in His own perfection with God. He acted thus with regard to Jerusalem, and wept over it. But here man is found to have lost the hope of God interposing on His people's behalf God would not abandon a man who was one of this people, who loved them, who understood that God loved them, that they were the object of His affection. He was one of them. How could he bear the idea that God had cast them off? No doubt God would re-establish them. But in the place where God had set them all hope was lost forever. In the Lord's own presence it is never lost. It is in view of this that all these exercises of heart are gone through, until the heart can fully enter into the mind and affections of God Himself indeed, this is always true.

"The Spirit gives us here a picture of all these exercises. How gracious! To see the Spirit of God enter into all these details, not only of the ways of God, but of that also which passes through a heart in which the judgment of God is felt by grace, until all is set right in the presence of God Himself. Inspiration gives us not only the perfect thoughts of God, and Christ the perfection of man before God, but also all the exercises produced in our poor hearts, when the perfect Spirit acts in them, so far as these thoughts, all mingled as they are, refer in the main to God, or are produced by Him. So truly cares He for us! He hearkens to our sighs, although much of imperfection and of that which belongs to our own heart is mixed with them. It is this that we see in the book of Lamentations, in the Psalms, and elsewhere, and abundantly, though in another manner, in the New Testament" (Synopsis of the Bible).

Jewish Commentary on the Book of Lamentations (EICHAH)

by Rabbi Avi Geller[5]

Lamentations was written by the Prophet Jeremiah, according to some opinions before the events occurred. The verses follow the *Aleph-Beit* in three chapters, a hint to the three cardinal sins that caused the First Temple to be destroyed. The third chapter (some say added later) alludes to the destruction of the Second Temple, caused by unjustifiable hatred. It contains three sets of *Aleph-Beit*, as that sin is as destructive as the three cardinal sins put together.

Chapter One

The prophet describes all of the suffering that befell the Jewish people at the time of the destruction of the Temple. "*Eichah!* How is it possible? The proud majestic city of Jerusalem, in ruins! Her inhabitants in exile! Her enemies rejoicing!"

The sages point out the similarity of the word *"Eichah"* (How!) and the word *"Ayecha?"* in Genesis when God asks "Where are you, Adam?" The answer to Jeremiah's question - *How did it happen?* - is that the Jewish people disregarded the Almighty, just as Adam did in the Garden of Eden.

Jeremiah paints a vivid portrait of a widow crying in the night, tears on her cheeks, with no one to comfort her, forsaken by all her friends. Likewise, Judah has been exiled and dwells in servitude among the nations, while Zion sits in mourning and desolation, missing the myriad pilgrims who would swarm her gates. Jerusalem remembers the bitter destruction, the glorious era that preceded it, and the fact that no nation came to her aid. On the contrary, the allies they depended on, reneged on them, and rejoiced over Jerusalem's desolation.

The prophet reveals the cause. Jerusalem did not have the foresight to contemplate the result of her degeneration. By forgetting her destiny she plummeted all the way down.

Jeremiah describes the enemy army entering the Temple, and the people of Jerusalem dying of hunger. To all who pass by, Jerusalem cries, "May you not

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suffer as I have!" Is there anything to compare this to? (The suffering of Jews throughout history, up to and including the Holocaust, is beyond any historical comparison.)

Remembering Jerusalem's past glory, no consolation is possible. However in the end we accept the Divine verdict. The chapter concludes that eventually the enemies of Israel will experience the same bitter end.

Chapter Two

In broad strokes, the prophet pictures the glory of Israel thrown from Heaven to the ground. Jerusalem is on fire. The prophet pictures children dying of hunger, begging their mothers for food, before expiring on their mothers' bosom. There is no comparison in history to comfort you with, proclaims the prophet.

What is the cause of Israel's suffering? False prophets lulled us into a false sense of security. (The Jews didn't believe it could happen...)

All the nations pass by (so to speak) and clap and whistle in disbelief: "Is this the glorious, beautiful Jerusalem that was the joy of all the land?!" Israel's enemies open their mouths, whistle and gnash their teeth in satisfaction. "This is the event we have waited for and have finally gotten to see."

The Jews beseech the Almighty: "Look at what You have done!" The prophet replies: "Fellow Jews murdered (the prophet Zechariah) in the Temple courtyard (on Yom Kippur) for rebuking them about their deeds." Don't forget the other side of the coin!

Chapter Three

Jeremiah cries over the fact that he witnessed punishment that previous prophets had only warned of. Jeremiah was chosen to express the pain of Jewish suffering. He sees his life as dark, as God has closed the windows of Heaven before his prayers. Jeremiah has been ambushed as by a bear or lion, and is now the laughingstock of his people who ridiculed his prophesies. They embittered his life and broke his teeth. He feels no inner peace. He has no future, yet he still hasn't lost his faith. From the depth of his pain, he turns to the Almighty in prayer. "Remember me and all of my suffering!"

Suddenly: inspiration and comfort! Jeremiah is consoled. God's kindness and mercy never ends. Miracles surround us constantly in life. God is good to those who trust in Him and seek Him out. One must never give up hope and always wait for God's salvation that will eventually come! Suffering brings us to the

realization that we have free will and we should cry over our mistakes and misdeeds - the cause of all suffering. When we make a personal introspection of our deeds and fully return to God, we shall admit our responsibility. Then God will hear our prayers, fight our fights, and repay our enemies all that they have done to us.

Chapter Four

This chapter begins with another description of Jerusalem's destruction. The gold was tarnished, the shine of the Temple darkened. The precious stones (the Jewish people) thrown into the streets! Precious Jewish children, given over to cruel enemies. Their tongues stuck to their throats in thirst and no one gives them bread. The pampered children who were used to delicacies are now picking in the garbage dump. Their bodies so ravaged by hunger as to be unrecognizable. Their faces darker then soot. Their skin shriveled on their bones.

The victims of the sword were better off than those who starved to death in agony. Merciful women cooked their own children! The nations and their kings could not believe their eyes. The blind trip over corpses in the street and are covered with blood.

The Jewish people waited in vain for their allies (Egypt) to come to their aid. The Midrash says that the Egyptians were on their way when they noticed bones in the Red Sea and remembered their ancestors.

Our enemies were lighter than the eagles. They chased us from the mountains and ambushed us in the desert. The righteous king Yoshiyahu was killed as a result of our deeds.

The chapter ends with a prophesy of the Second Temple's destruction - "Rome rejoice!" - and a consolation that in the end "You will drink from the same cup of retribution. Zion - your sins are atoned and you will suffer no more."

Chapter Five

"Remember the Almighty!" This last chapter is one loud outcry of prayer, faith and hope. Remember what has happened to us and see our degradation. Strangers have taken our inheritance; our houses are occupied by others. We must pay to drink our water and buy our own firewood. Death through hunger ... young and old mercilessly destroyed. Our joy turned to mourning. Our crown fell off our heads.

Lamentations ends with a description of a desolate Mount Zion with foxes wandering freely about her holy abode. "For this do our hearts ache and our eyes dim."

However, the book ends with a fervent prayer for the future: *"May You, Almighty, forever rule on Your throne for all generations. Why have You forsaken your people for so long?"* And our final request: *"Return us unto You and we will return* (the *baal teshuva* movement!) *Renew our days as of old!"*

The Talmud says that when the Sages were walking through Jerusalem after the destruction, they noticed foxes strolling through the Holy of Holies. The Sages all began to weep, except for Rabbi Akiva who was laughing. When asked to explain, he declared: "Now that we have witnessed the fulfilment of the dreadful prophesy of Jeremiah, we can also be certain that Zechariah's prophesy about the rebuilding of the Temple will be fulfilled soon and in our days!"

Questionnaire on Jeremiah and Lamentations

Jeremiah

Chapter 1

1. How long did Jeremiah receive the word of the Lord?
2. How did God know Jeremiah before he was born?
3. What did the almond tree represent?
4. What did the boiling pot represent?

Chapter 2

1. What had Israel done that even the nations of Cyprus and Kedar had not done?
2. What did Israel not have within themselves?
3. When would Israel call on God?

Chapter 3-4

1. How did the people have a harlot's forehead?
2. How was Israel more righteous than Judah?
3. What will God do for those who put away the evil and return to Him?
4. What causes calamity to come upon us?

Chapter 5-6

1. When calamity befalls us what should we look for in understanding why?
2. What will open our eyes and ears to understanding God?
3. What horrible thing were the priests and scribes doing?
4. How were the people uncircumcised in their ears?
5. What were the sacrifices and offerings of the people unwanted by God?

Chapter 7-8

1. How much should we change our ways to please God?
2. What did the people do even after committing all kinds of evil?
3. What was the false pen of the scribe?

Chapter 9-10

1. What is the wormwood that would be fed to Judah?
2. Why is the pride of man's wisdom, might, and wealth mean nothing?
3. What habit of the Gentiles were the Jews seeking?

Chapter 11-13

1. What did God call His people who faithfully served Him?
2. What was the tree and fruit the people wanted to destroy?
3. Who were the evil neighbors that God would give a chance to dwell with His people?
4. What did the ruined sash represent?

Chapter 14-15

1. Why is God the Hope of Israel?
2. How were the prophets lying to the people?
3. How would death, famine, the sword, and captivity come upon the people?
4. What are we to do even when all come against us?

Chapter 16-17

1. When would fisherman be sent to Israel?
2. Who would come to know God during Israel's captivity?
3. What will happen to a man who trust in his own strength or in the help of man?
4. What will happen to those who trust in the Lord?

5. What work should be done on the Sabbath?

Chapter 18-20

1. What is the significance of the potter and the clay?
2. How did the people attack Jeremiah?
3. What did the broken flask represent?
4. What would happen to Pashhur?

Chapter 21-22

1. What message was sent to the house of the king of Judah?
2. What is a sign of knowing God?
3. When was the message to King Josiah's sons delivered?

Chapter 23-24

1. Who is the branch of righteousness that would reign in Judah and all Israel?
2. Who made the people worthless before God?
3. Who are the good figs and bad figs?
4. What hope does God have between the good and bad figs?

Chapter 25-27

1. How long would the people be in captivity?
2. What is God's word to the nations around His people?
3. Why did the people want to kill Jeremiah at the house of the Lord?
4. Who helped save Jeremiah from harm?
5. How many generations of the King of Babylon would rule over Judah during their captivity?
6. What would happen to Babylon after God's appointed time?

Chapter 28-30

1. What was Hananiah's prophecy of the captives and the Lord's vessels?
2. What is the sign of a true prophet?
3. What happened to Hananiah?
4. How did Jeremiah's letter get to the captives at Babylon?
5. What did Jeremiah write to the captives in Babylon?
6. How would the captives in Babylon find God again?
7. What did Shemaiah write about Jeremiah?
8. What would happen to Shemaiah in Babylon?

Chapter 31-33

1. How would God cause His people to walk straight paths?
2. How would God ransom Israel from the enemy?
3. Why is Rachel weeping?
4. How did God put His law into our heart and mind?
5. Why had King Zedekiah put Jeremiah in prison?
6. What was the purpose of Jeremiah buying a field even though the city was under siege?
7. Who is the Branch of Righteousness to save Israel?

Chapter 34-36

1. What did law did King Zedekiah seek to obey?
2. Who were the Rechabites?
3. What did God try to have the Rechabites understand?
4. What did God hope the people would do when they heard the words of Jeremiah written by Baruch?
5. What did King Josiah do with the scroll?

Chapter 37-39

1. Where was Jeremiah first imprisoned?
2. Where did the princes of the King of Judah have Jeremiah confined?
3. Who helped Jeremiah out of his place of confinement?
4. Why did Zedekiah want his conversation with Jeremiah to be kept secret?
5. What happened to Zedekiah and his sons?
6. What happened to Ebed-Melech?

Chapter 40-42

1. Who was put in charge of the remnant of Judah by the king of Babylon?
2. Who did Ishmael kill?
3. How many men from Shiloh did Ishmael kill?
4. Who rescued the remnant of Judah from the hands of Ishmael?
5. Why was Johanan and the captains of the forces afraid to go back to Jerusalem?

Chapter 43-45

1. Where did Johanan and the people of Judah decide to dwell?

2. What did the remnant begin to do in the land in which they dwelt?
3. What blessing did God put upon Baruch?

Chapter 46-49

1. What is the irony of the remnant of Judah going to Egypt?
2. What did the nations who were prophesied against have in common?

Chapter 50

1. Why is Babylon to fall to the wrath of God?
2. What was to happen to Babylon?
3. Who are the strong in Babylon?
4. What will the strong do when a nation comes against them?
5. Why will God do as He purposes against Babylon?

Chapter 51-52

1. How do we spiritually flee from Babylon?
2. Why is Babylon a destroying mountain?
3. What nation was to come against Babylon?
4. What would happen when the sea and the springs of Babylon dry up?
5. Who is responsible for delivering themselves from the fierce anger of God?
6. How long was Jerusalem under siege by Babylon?
7. What did Nebuchadnezzar do to the house of the Lord?

Lamentations

1. Who do you think wrote Lamentations?
2. Why does the Poet imagine Zion as a woman?
3. How does Jerusalem in her glory compare to the city at the time of the poem?
4. Is the Poet victim-blaming here? Is that an okay thing to do?
5. Was God justified in destroying the city? Is that a question the people would have even asked at the time?
6. How does the Poet encourage hope in this time of destruction?
7. Why does the Poet ask God to punish his enemies in the same way he's punished the people of Jerusalem?
8. The Poet compares Jerusalem's sins to Sodom's. Which do you think are worse?
9. How are different people in the city affected by its destruction? Who are the most vulnerable?

10. Do you think the people's suffering is exaggerated or accurate in these poems? Why or why not?
11. Do you think this tragedy should have damaged the people's relationship with God? Why didn't it?
12. And the big question—why do bad things happen? Does Lamentations give us a good answer?

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